

A MARCHING PARTY OF EXILES PASSING A TRAIN OF FREIGHT-SLEDGES.

SIBERIA AND THE EXILE SYSTEM

BY GEORGE KENNAN

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SIBERIA AND THE EXILE SYSTEM



SIBERIA AND THE EXILE SYSTEM

CHAPTER I

PRISONS AND EXILES IN IRKÚTSK

I'was so late when we reached Irkútsk Sunday afternoon, and we were so tired from our thousand-mile ride, that we did not attempt to do anything except bathe, change our clothing, dine, and go to bed. Monday, after we had sent our passports to the police-station, Mr. Frost strolled down to the river-side to make some sketches, while I went out to look at the city and find, if possible, a certain political exile to whom I had a letter of introduction.

Irkutsk is situated on the right, or northern, bank of the Angará, about forty miles from the point where that navigable river flows out of Lake Baikál. At the time of our visit it had a population of 36,000, and was therefore the largest city in Siberia. It contained an excellent weekly newspaper, a public library, a branch of the Imperial Geographical Society, a good theater, and about thirty public schools, and the business of its merchants, traders, and manufacturers amounted annually to more than 11,000,000 rúbles. The city had not yet recovered from the great fire of July, 1879, which destroyed nearly 4000 buildings, rendered homeless 15,000 people, and consumed property valued

¹ The Sibir, edited by Mr. M. V. Zagóskin. After a long struggle with the press censorship, this enterprising and ably conducted newspaper has finally been suppressed.

at 20,000,000 *rúbles*. Traces of this fire were still to be seen in many parts of the city, and even where such traces were not visible the streets and buildings had a raggedness and newness that suggested a rapidly growing frontier mining



EXTENSION OF VIEW BELOW.

town rather than a city founded in 1652. Generally speaking, it seemed to me a much less interesting and attractive place than when I saw it first in 1867. One of the most curious, and apparently one of the oldest, buildings spared by the fire was a massive stone powder-magazine, which stood on the outskirts of the open-air bazar in the midst of



the lower half of the city. Its roof was overgrown with grass and weeds; its sides were incrusted with the barnacle-like stalls and booths of retail traders, and around it, during all the busy hours of the day, surged a throng of Buriáts, Mongols, Cossacks, and Russian peasants, who seemed to be buying or bargaining for all sorts of mer-

chandise, from a *tárantás* or a *teléga* to a second-hand pair of boots.

After exploring the bazar, rambling about the city for two or three hours, and delivering some of my letters of introduction, I returned to the hotel. Zhan, with a perturbed countenance, met me in the hall and informed me that the chief of police had just been there after us and

had left a verbal request that we call upon him at once. Zhan's experience of life had evidently convinced him that a visit from the chief of police, like the appearance of a stormy petrel at sea, was a threatening phenomenon; and although he asked no questions, he looked at me with



BOATS ON THE ANGARÁ.

some bewilderment and anxiety. Upon going to our room I found two cards bearing the name of Christopher Fómich Makófski, the Irkútsk chief of police, a gentleman with whom we were destined to become somewhat intimately acquainted, and an officer who had been connected with one of the ghastliest tragedies in the recent history of political exile—the hunger strike in the Irkútsk prison. So far as I could remember, there had been nothing suspicious in our movements since our arrival in Irkútsk, and I was at a loss to know why we were so soon "wanted"; but I had always made it a rule in Russia to obey promptly the first summons of the police, and in less than ten minutes Mr. Frost and I were on our way to Captain Makófski's house. Learning that he was not at home, we left cards and drove to the central police-station. He was not there. Having thus done all that we could, we returned to the hotel, and Mr. Frost went out again to sketch the old powder-magazine shown

in the illustration on the opposite page. Half an hour later Zhan appeared with a dejected air, holding gingerly between his fingers another card of the chief of police, who, he said, was waiting in the corridor and wished to see us. second call within two hours suprised me a little, but of course I told Zhan to show the chief of police in. I heard quick footsteps and the jingle of spurs in the hall, and in another instant Captain Makófski, in full uniform, entered the room. I was prepared for something unpleasant, and rose from my chair fully expecting to meet a man with a stern official face who would look at me suspiciously and either tell me that there was something wrong with my passport, or else inquire how long and for what purpose I had been looking up political exiles. Imagine my surprise to see a rather handsome officer of middle age, with good features, blue eyes, closely cut hair, and a full brown beard, who advanced to meet me with outstretched hand, and whose face fairly beamed with smiling cordiality as he said: "I am Makófski, the chief of police. I have the pleasure of knowing you by reputation,—I have read your book, and when an eminent foreign traveler comes to Siberia to study the country, I regard it as only my duty to call upon him and offer my services."

I was so nearly paralyzed with astonishment at this wholly unexpected greeting that for a moment I could hardly reply; but I managed to thank him and ask him to take a seat. We had a pleasant chat of ten minutes with regard to the roads, the weather, our Siberian experiences, the changed appearance of Irkútsk, etc., and then Captain Makófski said: "I understand that you are interested, among other things, in prisons and the exile system. I think you will find the city prison here in good condition. I will send some one to show you through it, and I will not forewarn the prison officers that you are coming—you shall see it just as it is every day."

"This," I said to myself, "is the kind of chief of police that every well-regulated Siberian city ought to have."



OLD POWDER-MAGAZINE AND BAZAR, IRKÚTSK.

In the general discussion of the exile system which followed, Captain Makófski admitted that it was a great burden to the country and an evil thing in itself, but he said that there did not seem to be any prospect of its speedy abolition.

"The chief difficulty in the way," he said, "is the financial difficulty. The adoption of a central prison system in European Russia in place of the exile system has been suggested and discussed, but the change would necessitate the building of twenty large new prisons at a cost of about ten million rúbles, and the financial condition of the country is such as to render this impracticable."

While we were talking Mr. Frost came in, and after some further general conversation the chief of police took his leave, urging us to call upon him informally and soon. I could not at this interview fully make up my mind with regard to his character and motives. He seemed to be everything that was amiable; but there was a suggestion of surface artificiality about his beaming smile and a touch of exaggeration in his complimentary deference which suggested diplomacy rather than perfect sincerity. I felt, however, that I had no right on this ground to throw stones at anybody, since I myself was living in a very large and very fragile glass house.

On Wednesday we returned Captain Makófski's call, and Thursday afternoon he came to our hotel to escort us to the prisons. The general city prison and the forwarding prison of Irkútsk are situated side by side a little out of the busy part of the city, from which they are separated by a small shallow stream called the Ushakófka. The forwarding prison, which at Captain Makófski's suggestion we visited first, proved to be nothing more than a large but old and half-decayed étape, varying from the usual roadside type of such buildings only in size and in the arrangement of its kámeras. One could see at a glance that it was in very bad repair. The logs in some places had rotted almost entirely

away; the stockade around the courtyard looked old and weather-beaten; and in almost every window one or more panes of glass had been broken out and the holes had been stopped with rags, old clothes, or pieces of coarse dirty matting. Captain Makófski, observing that I noticed these things, said in explanation of them that it had not been thought best to make extensive repairs, because there was a plan under consideration for the erection of a new building. As we entered the main corridor the officer of the day sprang hastily to the door, saluted the warden, who was with us, and in a sort of rapid, monotonous recitative said, without once taking breath, "Your-High-Nobility-Ihave-the-honor-to-report-that-the-condition-of-the-Irkútskforwarding-prison-on-this-the-fifth-day-of-September-1885is-blagopoluchno [prosperous or satisfactory] and-that-itnow-contains-271-prisoners." The warden nodded his head, said "All right," and we began our inspection of the prison. It seemed to me an extremely dreary, gloomy, and neglected place. Its kámeras did not differ essentially from those in the forwarding prison of Tomsk, except that they were less crowded. Most of them were fairly well lighted, they were warmed by large square brick ovens, and they contained no furniture except low plank sleeping-platforms of the usual type. The prisoners had no bedding except their overcoats, and in a few cases small thin "crazy quilts" about two feet wide and six feet long, which they had evidently made for themselves out of countless hoarded rags and scraps of cloth, and which they used to spread down upon and thus soften a little the hard planks of the nári. I did not see a blanket nor a pillow in the prison. The kámeras contained from twenty to forty men each, and the heavy foulness of the air showed that there was little or no ventilation. The floors, judged by Siberian standards, were not disgracefully dirty, but they had been freshly sprinkled with white sand

¹ Three years later a newforwarding ándrofsk, a short distance north of Irprison, intended to take the place of kútsk. (See Appendix G.) this, was erected in the village of Alex-

S SIBERIA

in evident anticipation of our visit. Throughout the prison the men seemed to be wholly separated from the women and children, and in the $k\acute{a}meras$ devoted to the latter there was less overcrowding, more cleanliness, and purer air.

From the forwarding prison we went to the general city prison, which stood about a hundred yards away on the same street, and which consisted of a large two-story building of brick covered with white stucco and roofed with tin. In general type it resembled a little the forwarding prison of Tiumén; but it differed from the latter in having an interior courtyard 75 or 100 feet square which, by means of graveled walks and prim geometrical flowerbeds, had been turned into a sort of garden and which served as a place of exercise for the inmates. This prison was erected in 1861 at a cost of 62,000 rúbles, and was intended to accommodate 450 prisoners. At the time of our visit it held 743, and the warden admitted to me that it sometimes contained 1500. According to Mr. S. S. Popóf, who made a special study of this prison and who wrote a monograph upon it for the newspaper Sibír, no less than 2000 prisoners have at times been packed into its kámeras. In other words, every cell has been made to hold more than four times the number of prisoners for which it was intended. The results of such overcrowding I have already described several times in my sketches of other Siberian prisons. The air in the kámeras was somewhat less poisonous than in the forwarding prison of Tiumén, but it was nevertheless very foul, and many piteous complaints of it were made by the prisoners, both to Captain Makófski and to me, as we passed through the cells. The condition of the atmosphere in the overcrowded and badly ventilated hospital seemed to me to be something terrible. Although we went through only two or three wards, and that hastily, and although I held my breath

^{1 &}quot;The Prisoners of the Irkútsk Prison Castle, and their Maintenance," by S. S. Popóf, Annual of the newspaper Sibír, p. 210. Irkútsk, 1876.

almost to the point of suffocation rather than take such terribly polluted air into my lungs, I came out feeling faint, sick, and giddy.¹

The prevalent diseases here, as in other Siberian prisons, were typhus fever, scurvy, anemia, rheumatism, and bronchitis—all of them disorders pointing to unfavorable sanitary conditions.

From the hospital we crossed the little interior garden to the so-called "secret" or solitary-confinement cells, where the chief of police said there was one political prisoner with whom he would allow me to talk. I had already heard much of the prison life of the Russian revolutionists, but I had not as yet seen a single one actually in solitary confinement. Entering a sort of hall at one corner of the courtyard, Captain Makófski, accompanied by a turnkey, preceded us through a locked and grated door into a long, narrow corridor, where an armed sentry was pacing back and forth in front of a row of cells. The heavy wooden doors of these cells were secured by padlocks, and in the middle of every one was a small square aperture through which food could be passed and the prisoner be watched by the guard. The name of the political offender whom we were about to visit was Ferdinand Liústig,—formerly an army officer, Captain Makófski thought,—who had been arrested in St. Petersburg in March, 1881, soon after the assassination of the late Tsar. He had been tried as a revolutionist, had been sentenced to four years of penal servitude, had finished his term, and was on his way from the mines of Kará to some place in Eastern Siberia, where he was to be settled as a forced colonist.

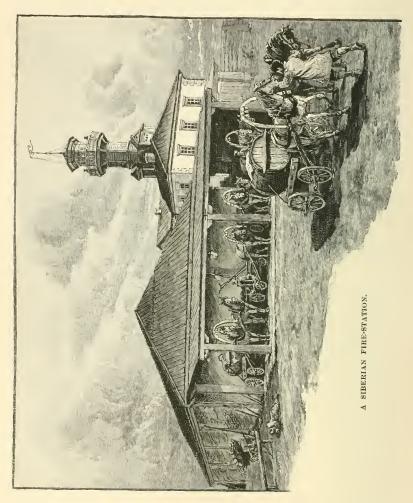
The turnkey unlocked and threw open a door marked "No. 6," and we stepped into a long but narrow and gloomy cell, where a good-looking young man with closely cut hair, blue eyes, and a full brown beard was sitting in a dejected attitude upon a small wooden bed. He rose hastily when

¹ See statements with regard to this prison in Appendix G.

we entered, as if he were anticipating some change in his fortunes, and Captain Makófski, with an air of hearty goodfellowship, exclaimed: "Good afternoon, Mr. Liústig! We have come to cheer you up a little. These are American travelers who have been looking through the prison, and I thought that perhaps you would like to see them." The transient expression of hope and expectancy in the young man's face slowly faded as he shook hands with us, and his manner became nervous and embarrassed, as if he had been isolated so long from all human society that he hardly knew how to talk or what to say. The situation was an awkward one, even for me, on account of the presence of Captain Makófski, the turnkey, and a soldier. If Mr. Liústig and I had been alone together, we should soon have come to an understanding and should undoubtedly have talked for hours; but under existing circumstances I could say nothing that I wished to say, and felt conscious that I must appear to him like a mere tourist, who had come to look at a "nihilist" in prison, as one might look at a new species of wild animal in a zoölogical garden. The cell occupied by Mr. Liústig was about 20 feet long by 6 feet wide and 12 feet high. It was lighted by one very small barred window in the end wall opposite the door. This window, which was so high that I could not reach it, would have opened upon the little garden in the courtyard, had not a high stockade been erected in front of it at a distance of a few feet. The stockade hid not only the whole outside world, but even the sky, so that Mr. Liústig could hardly tell, by looking up at his little window, whether the weather was clear or stormy—whether it was winter or summer. Although the walls and ceiling had been whitewashed, the cell was dark and gloomy, and it seemed to me, moreover, to be very cold. It contained no furniture except a small wooden bedstead covered with a thin gray blanket, and a square box in which there was a pail or bucket for excrement. The prisoner was not allowed to have chair, table, books, or writing-materials; he could not get even so much as a glimpse of the outside world; and he had absolutely nothing to do except to sit on his bed in that gloomy prison twilight and think. I asked him how long he had been there, and he replied, "Since the 1st of June"—nearly four months. He was detained, Captain Makófski said, to await the decision of a question that had been raised as to the place where he should be colonized. How soon his case would be reached in the Circumlocution Office of the Government nobody knew, and apparently nobody cared. Meanwhile his condition was worse than if he had been in penal servitude. I wished very much to ask him a few questions with regard to his life at the mines of Kará; but I knew that it would be useless to interrogate him in the presence of Captain Makófski, and so, after shaking hands with him again and wishing him a speedy release, I bade him good-by. Ten minutes later, as it was beginning to grow dark in the prison, and as I had seen all that I cared to see, we returned to our hotel. I could not agree with Captain Makófski that the Irkútsk prisons were "in good condition"; but as he did not ask me what I thought of them, I volunteered no opinion.

After we had finished our inspection of the prisons Captain Makófski asked me if I would not like to see the calling out of the fire command at one of the stations. I replied, of course, that I should be very glad to see it. We drove to the fire-engine-house of the second municipal district, and Captain Makófski shouted to the watchman in the fire tower "Trevóga!" [Alarm!]. The watchman pulled a long rope stretched between the tower and the engine-house, and in just two and a half minutes, out came the fire command ready for action. First appeared the guide,—a fireman mounted on a fine gray horse,—next came the engine, a rather clumsy English machine with hand-brakes drawn by two spirited horses, then four large barrels mounted on wheels, and finally a hook-and-ladder truck. The fire com-

mand consisted of twenty or twenty-five men in gray uniform and big brass helmets. They went a short distance up the street and came back at a tearing gallop, raising a cloud



of dust, and attracting an immense crowd of spectators. They then returned, limbered up the engine, and threw a stream of water to the top of the fire tower. The exhibition as a whole was fairly creditable for a provincial town.

The men and horses were well drilled and the service was good, but the supply of water furnished by the train of barrels seemed to be absurdly inadequate. It took one barrelful of water merely to fill the service-pipe. After the fire command had been dismissed with our compliments and thanks we drove back to our hotel.

Several days elapsed before I saw the chief of police again, and in the mean time a visit of inspection was made to the prisons by Count Ignátief, the newly appointed Governor-general of Eastern Siberia, who had just assumed the duties of his position. Tuesday of the following week Captain Makófski called upon us, and after the interchange of a few unimportant remarks said to me with some eagerness, "Mr. Kennan, please tell me frankly what impression was made upon you the other day by our prisons." I told him frankly that Siberian prisons generally made upon me a very bad impression, and that all I could truthfully say of the prisons in Irkútsk was that they were a little better—that is, somewhat less bad—than the prisons in Tiumén and Tomsk.

"I asked the question," he resumed, "because Count Ignátief and his wife have just made a visit of inspection and they are terribly dissatisfied. The Count finds the prisons dirty and overcrowded, the air foul and bad, the linen of the prisoners dirty and coarse, and the state of things unsatisfactory generally. Of course I know myself that the air in the kámeras is foul; but if you have to put thirty men into a room like this [indicating our hotel room], how can you keep the air pure? It is very true also that the linen of the prisoners is cheap and coarse, but it is the best that can be had for the money that the Government allows. If you go to a hotel and pay two rúbles for a dinner, you have a right to expect a good one; but what can you expect if you pay only eight kopéks? As for the prisoners' linen being dirty of course it's dirty! The Government gives a prisoner only one shirt every six months and one khalát [gray overcoat] every year. In these clothes he lives and sleeps twenty-four

hours a day and thirty days a month without once taking them off except to bathe—of course they get dirty!"

"If a prisoner has no spare clothing," I inquired, "how does he get his one shirt washed? Does he never wash it, or does he go half the time naked?"

"When he visits the bath-house," replied Captain Makófski, "he usually washes at the same time his body and his clothing, dries the latter as best he can, and puts it on again—he has no change."

I referred to the sufferings of exiles who are compelled to sleep in wet clothing after every rain-storm on the road, and said I did not wonder that the hospitals of the forwarding prisons were crowded with the sick. He assented and said, "The life of prisoners on the road is awful. So far as the condition of the prisons here depends upon me," he continued after a moment's pause, "it is as good as circumstances will permit. There are no accumulations of filth anywhere, and the sanitary condition of the buildings is as good as I can make it—better perhaps than that of many private houses in the city."

It was interesting and instructive to me to see how unconscious Captain Makófski seemed to be of the existence of any very extraordinary evils in the Irkútsk prisons. Apparently he had grown so accustomed to the state of things there that it seemed to him to be nearly if not quite normal, and it gave him a sort of mental shock to find that the new Governor-general was so dissatisfied with the prisons and their management. He attributed this dissatisfaction, however, largely to the influence of the Countess Ignátief, whom he characterized as a kind-hearted but inexperienced lady who did not appreciate the difficulties in the way of such a system of prison administration as she desired to bring about.

"The Countess, however," I said, "seems to be a lady of quick perceptions and unusually good sense. An officer of the exile administration whom I met at dinner yesterday

told me that during the visit of the Governor-general and his wife to the prisons the other day the Countess asked to be shown some of the prisoners' soup. The warden brought some to her in a clean fresh plate, but she evidently thought that it had been especially prepared for the occasion. She therefore declined to taste it, and asked whether there had not been left in the bottom of the kettle some soup from the prisoners' dinner. Upon examination some soup was found there, and she desired that a spoonful of it be given to her. She tasted it, and then, handing back the spoon, remarked to the warden quietly, 'I'm glad to see that you are washing out that kettle—it ought to have been washed long ago.' Now, you can't say," I concluded, "that such a lady as that does n't know something about your prisons, and that she is n't very observing."

"Observing—observing!" exclaimed Captain Makófski, "that may all be; she is a very kind-hearted and benevolent lady, but she is impractical. She thinks that a common criminal prison ought to be in as good condition all the time as a young ladies' institute—and you and I know that that is utterly impossible."

I said that I thought the Irkútsk prisons might be improved a good deal without bringing them up anywhere near the level of a young ladies' institute.

Our conversation was interrupted at this point by the entrance of callers, and Captain Makófski took his leave, evidently somewhat disturbed by the attitude that the new Governor-general had taken towards the prisons.

On Count Ignátief's first public reception day Mr. Frost and I called upon him, partly as a mark of respect and partly with the hope that he might be willing to talk about the exile system and the penal institutions of the city. We found him to be a large, somewhat corpulent man about forty-five years of age, with a massive, nearly bald head and a strong but heavy and almost lethargic face. He received us courteously but formally, and began to talk to

us at once in English, which language he spoke fairly well but with some hesitation. At the first favorable opportunity I expressed my interest in the exile system and ventured to give him the results of some of my observations in the prisons of Tiumén and Tomsk and on the road. He responded without any apparent hesitation, and said frankly that he believed the exile system to be very prejudicial to all the interests of Siberia, and that in many respects it needed modification. He thought that the common criminal exiles ought to be utilized as laborers. There was plenty of useful work to be done in Siberia, and he could see no reason why the convict exiles should not be compelled to do it. A system of enforced labor would be better for them than the present method of keeping them shut up in prisons in idleness or turning them loose as colonists, and it certainly would be better for the country. He was about to take a step in this direction, he said, by setting one hundred convicts to work in the streets of Irkútsk. I spoke of the overcrowding of the prisons and étapes along the great exile road, and he admitted that they were too small and in very bad condition. He said that a plan was under consideration for the transportation of exiles from Tomsk to Irkútsk in summer only and in wagons. This would relieve the Government from the expense of providing them with winter clothing, it would greatly diminish the amount of suffering, and it would perhaps be more economical.1

While we were discussing this subject the Governorgeneral's wife came in to hand him a letter, and we were presented to her. She was a woman perhaps thirty years of age, of medium height, with brown hair, gray eyes, and a good, strong, intelligent, but somewhat impassive face. The appearance of the Countess Ignátief interrupted our discussion of the exile system, and, as we were making a merely formal call upon the Governor-general, we had no opportunity for renewing it.

¹ I shall have occasion to refer to this plan in a later chapter.

In the course of the twelve days that we spent in Irkútsk we made many pleasant and interesting acquaintances, among them Mr. Adam Bukófski, a well-known East-Siberian mining proprietor, who spoke English well and whose hospitable home was always open to us; Dr. Písaref, a well-known physician of the city, to whom we brought a letter of introduction from St. Petersburg; Mr. Bútin, formerly of Nérchinsk, who had traveled extensively in the United States and who was half an American in his ideas and sympathies, and Mr. Zagóskin, the venerable editor of the newspaper Sibír.

On the 21st of September, a little more than a week after our arrival, we were overtaken by our countryman Lieutenant Schuetze, who was on his way to the province of Yakútsk with the gifts sent by our Government to the people of that province who had aided and succored the survivors of the Arctic exploring steamer *Jeannette*. He had left America long after our departure, and it was a very great pleasure to us to meet him in that far-away part of the world, to hear his New York and Washington news, and to compare our respective experiences of Siberian travel.

A few days after my talk with Captain Makófski about the Irkútsk prisons, I called upon him at his house, and drew him into conversation upon the subject of political exile. He spoke very bitterly, almost contemptuously, of the revolutionists and "nihilists" generally, and seemed to regard most of them as wild fanatics, who were opposed, not only to the present form of government in the empire, but to government in any form, and who therefore should be put down with a strong hand. He said he once asked one of them, an exiled lady, what government she and her companions would establish in Russia if they had their way—a limited monarchy, a republic, a commune, or what? She replied that all men had been created free and equal, and that any kind of government was a violence done to individual liberty. "This, of course," said Captain Makófski, "was simply nonsense."

"There are several classes of political exiles, however," he continued, "for whom I have a great deal of pity and sympathy. In the first place, there are the young people who have never committed political crime themselves, but have happened to be in innocent correspondence with real revolutionists or upon terms of some intimacy with them. They have to suffer merely for being in bad company. In the second place, there are people who, to oblige friends or acquaintances, take charge temporarily of packages or satchels without ascertaining their contents. These packages, upon seizure by the police, are found to contain seditious proclamations, dynamite, or something of that sort. It is of no use for the innocent possessor of such a package to explain how it came into his hands, nor to declare that he was ignorant of its contents. He is always exiled. The third class consists of persons who have innocently lent money to revolutionists, the money being afterwards used, without the knowledge or consent of the lenders, for revolutionary purposes. Such men are also exiled, although they may be perfectly innocent of any thought of conspiracy against the Government. Finally, there is a certain class of young men, from eighteen to twenty-three or twenty-four years of age, who are full of ardor and enthusiasm, who really desire the good of their country, who see defects in the present system of government that they think can be remedied, and who desire not revolution, but modification and reorganization. Such young men are almost certain to be drawn into secret societies or revolutionary circles, and then they fall into the hands of the police and are sent to Siberia, although they cannot be called bad men, and all their aims and intentions may be pure and good. I have known many cases in each of these classes, and have always felt very sorry for them."

I have quoted Captain Makófski's words because they are a frank admission that the Russian Government sends to Siberia not only the flower of its youth, but banishes also

at least three classes of people who not only have never committed crime, but are guiltless of any intention to commit crime. I was well aware myself of this fact, but I had never before heard it admitted by a chief of police.

There were not many political exiles in Irkútsk at the time of our visit, and we had some difficulty in finding them. At last, however, we succeeded, without asking the help of Captain Makófski; and although he, as chief of police, was supposed to know everything that was going on, I do not think he dreamed that I sometimes went directly from his house to a place where I met all the political exiles in the city, and that I was spending with them half my nights.

I was surprised to find among the administrative exiles in Irkútsk men and women who had just returned from long terms of banishment in the sub-arctic province of Yakútsk. "How did it happen," I said to one of them, "that you, a mere administrative exile, were sent to the worst part of Eastern Siberia? I thought that the province of Yakútsk was reserved as a place of punishment for the more dangerous class of political offenders, and for compulsory colonists from the mines of the Trans-Baikál."

"That is not quite the case," he replied. "It is true that administrative exiles are usually sent to some part of Western Siberia, but they are frequently transferred afterward to the province of Yakútsk. I myself was sent to Western Siberia in the first place, but in 1881 I was transported to Yakútsk because I would not take the oath of allegiance to Alexander III."

"Do you mean," I said, "that the Government, while punishing you for treason, required you to take an oath of lovalty?"

"Precisely," he replied; "and because I could n't and would n't do it, I was banished to a Yakút ulús."1

tlement, consisting perhaps of only of miles from the nearest Russian vilone or two earth-covered yurts, situ- lage and more than 5000 miles from St.

¹ Ulús is the name for a native set-ness of Yakútsk, sometimes hundreds ated in the taigá, or primeval wilder- Petersburg. The gentleman to whom

"But," I exclaimed, "that was not only unjust, but stupid. What was the use of asking a political exile to swear that he was a loyal citizen?"

"There was no use of it," he answered; "but it was done. The Government did not even content itself with exacting an oath of loyalty, but required me to swear that I would tell all I knew about the revolutionary movement; or, in other words, betray my friends. I could not do that, even if I had been changed into a loyal subject by banishment."

Further inquiry elicited the fact, which was then a new one to me, that all administrative exiles who were living in Western Siberia when Alexander III. came to the throne in 1881 were required by the Minister of the Interior to take the oath of allegiance to the new Tsar. It was unreasonable, of course, to expect that men who were already undergoing punishment for disloyalty to Alexander II. would stultify themselves by taking an oath of allegiance to Alexander III.; yet the Minister of the Interior either entertained such an expectation, or else made a pretense of it in order to have an excuse for punishing a second time men who had not committed a second offense. If a criminal whose sentence has been pronounced, and who is already in exile, refuses to admit that his criminal act was wrong, such refusal may be a good reason for not setting him at liberty until the expiration of his penal term; but it is hardly a sufficient reason for arbitrarily increasing threefold the severity of his punishment. It would be regarded as a very remarkable proceeding if the governor of Illinois should go to-morrow

I here refer was sent to an *ulús* in the district of Amgá, only five degrees south of the arctic circle, and reached his destination in December, in the midst of an arctic winter. I have a list of names of seventy-nine political offenders who were living in Yakút *ulúses* in the year 1882, including the Russian novelist Vladímir Korolénko, Professor Bogdanóvitch, who was formerly instructor in chemistry in a uni-

versity in Austrian Poland, and M. Linóf, who had lived four or five years in the United States and had taken out his first naturalization papers as an American citizen. The list includes also one Frenchman, one German, and nine educated women. The Frenchman and the German had made appeals for help, I believe, to their own Governments, but without result.

to the anarchists sentenced to penal servitude in that State, require them to declare under oath that they were not anarchists, and then, if they refused, drag them out of their cells and hang them off-hand without benefit of clergy. Yet that is precisely analogous to the action that was taken by the Russian Government in the cases of administrative exiles who were living in Western Siberia when the present Tsar came to the throne. If the Minister of the Interior did not know that these men were disloyal, he had no right to punish them with exile. If, on the other hand, he did know that they were disloyal, he acted with cruel injustice in forcing upon them such a choice of alternatives as perjury or a living death in the sub-arctic province of Yakútsk. Scores of exiled men and women, who had committed no new offense, were sent from Western Siberia to Eastern Siberia, or to Yakút ulúses near the Asiatic pole of cold, simply because they would not perjure themselves and turn informers. One of these unfortunates was the gifted Russian novelist Vladímir Korolénko. He had already been banished three times,—once to Siberia through an administrative "mistake,"—and he was then transported to the province of Yakútsk because he would not betray his friends, kiss the mailed hand that had smitten him, and swear that he was a loyal subject of "The Lord's Anointed," Alexander III.

The reader may perhaps think that in describing banishment to a Yakút ulús as a "living death" I have used too strong an expression. I will therefore describe it as it appears to well-informed and dispassionate Russians. In the early part of the year 1881, when the liberal minister Loris-Melikof was in power and when there existed in Russia a limited freedom of the press, Mr. S. A. Priklónski, a well-known author and a gentleman who served at one time on the staff of the governor of the province of Olónets, published in the liberal newspaper Zemstvo—which was shortly afterward suppressed—a long and carefully prepared article

upon exile by administrative process. In that article—a copy of which now lies before me—Mr. Priklónski, over his own signature, uses the following language with regard to the life of political exiles in Yakút ulúses:

There exists in the province of Yakútsk a form of exile more severe and more barbarous than anything that the Russian public has yet known, . . . namely, banishment to *ulúses*. This consists in the assignment of administrative exiles separately to residences in scattered Yakút yurts, situated sometimes many versts one from another. A recent number of the Russian Gazette (No. 23), in its correspondence from Yakútsk, publishes the following extract from the letter of an *ulús* exile, which graphically describes the awful situation of an educated human being who has been mercilessly thrown into one of the yurts of these arctic savages.

"The Cossacks who had brought me from the town of Yakútsk to my destination soon returned, and I was left alone among Yakúts who do not understand a word of Russian. They watch me constantly, for fear that if I escape they will have to answer for it to the Russian authorities. If I go out of the close atmosphere of the solitary *yurt* to walk, I am followed by a suspicious Yakút. If I take an ax to cut myself a cane, the Yakút directs me by gestures and pantomime to let it alone and go back into the yurt. I return thither, and before the fireplace I see a Yakút who has stripped himself naked, and is hunting for lice in his clothing - a pleasant picture! The Yakúts live in winter in the same buildings with their cattle, and frequently are not separated from the latter even by the thinnest partition. The excrement of the cattle and of the children; the inconceivable disorder and filth; the rotting straw and rags; the myriads of vermin in the bedding; the foul, oppressive air, and the impossibility of speaking a word of Russian—all these things taken together are positively enough to drive one insane. The food of the Yakúts can hardly be eaten. It is carelessly prepared, without salt, often of tainted materials, and the unaccustomed stomach rejects it with nausea. I have no separate dishes or clothing of my own; there are no facilities for bathing, and during the whole winter - eight months — I am as dirty as a Yakút. I cannot go anywhere—least of all to the town, which is two hundred versts distant. I live with the Yakúts by turns—staying with one family for six weeks, and then going for the same length of time to another. I have

nothing to read,—neither books nor newspapers,—and I know nothing of what is going on in the world.

Beyond this [says Mr. Priklónski in commenting upon the letter] severity cannot go. Beyond this there remains nothing to do but to tie a man to the tail of a wild horse, and drive him into the steppe, or chain him to a corpse and leave him to his fate. One does not wish to believe that a human being can be subjected, without trial and by a mere executive order, to such grievous torment—to a punishment which European civilization has banished from its penal code even for the most desperate class of villains whose inhuman crimes have been proved by trial in a criminal court. And yet we are assured by the correspondent of the Russian Gazette that up to this time none of the exiles in the province of Yakútsk have been granted any alleviating privileges; ten newly arrived administratives have been distributed,— most of them among the ulúses,— and more are expected in the near future:

The statements made in Mr. Priklónski's article are supported by private letters, now in my possession, from *ulús* exiles, by the concurrent testimony of a large number of politicals who have lived through this experience, and by

1 Since Mr. Priklónski, the fearless and talented author of this article, is now dead, I may say, without fear of injuring him, that he himself gave me the copy of it that I now have, together with a quantity of other manuscript material relating to exile by administrative process. He was a man of high character and more than ordinary ability, and is well and favorably known in Russia as the author of "Sketches of Self-government," published in 1884; "Popular Life in the North," which appeared in 1886; and a large number of articles upon local self-government and the condition of the Russian peasantry, printed from time to time in the journals The Week, Zemstro, and Russian Thought. Mr. Priklónski was not a revolutionist, and the article from which I have made quotations was not published in a revolutionary sheet. It appeared in the Zemstvo, the unofficial organ of the Russian provincial assem-

blies, which was at that time under the editorial management of the wellknown author and publicist Mr. V. U. Skalon. I mention these facts merely to show that if the Russian Government cared anything about the condition of political exiles in the province of Yakútsk, it had no excuse for inaction. Its attention was called to the subject by persons who did not seek to escape responsibility for their words, and by citizens whose abilities and patriotic services entitled them to a respectful hearing. As the Minister of the Interior has continued to send educated human beings to Yakút ulúses from that time to this, he has made it impossible for the civilized world to draw any other conclusion than that he consciously and deliberately intends to subject men and women, without trial or hearing, to the miseries set forth in the letter from which Mr. Priklónski quotes.

my own personal observation. I have myself slept in sodcovered Yakút yurts side by side with cattle; I have borne some of the hardships of life in these wretched habitations. and I know how intolerable it must be for a refined and educated human being—and especially for a woman—to spend months or years in the midst of such an environment. It must be said, however, in fairness, that some administrative exiles, who are allowed to receive money from their friends, buy or build houses for themselves, and have a somewhat more endurable existence. The Russian novelist Korolénko occupied a house of his own, apart from the Yakúts, and a number of the returned ulús exiles whose acquaintance I made in Tomsk and Irkútsk told me that, with the aid of friends, they bought, built, or hired log houses in the ulúses to which they had been banished, and thus escaped the filth and disorder of the Yakút yurts. Some of them, too, had a few books, and received letters from their relatives once or twice a year, through the police. They suffered, nevertheless, great hardships and privations. Mr. Linóf, a cultivated gentleman who had resided several years in the United States and who spoke English well, told me that after his banishment to the province of Yakútsk he sometimes lived for months at a time without bread, subsisting for the most part upon fish and meat. His health was broken down by his experience, and he died at an East Siberian étape in May, 1886, less than six months after I made his acquaintance. That the life of ulús exiles, even under the most favorable circumstances, is almost an unendurable one sufficiently appears from the frequency with which they escape from it by self-destruction. Of the seventy-nine politicals who were in exile in the province of Yakútsk in 1882, six had committed suicide previous to 1885. How many have died in that way since then I do not know, but of the six to whom I refer I have the names.

Since my return from Siberia the Russian Government has been sending political suspects by administrative pro-

cess to the territory of Yakútsk for longer periods than ever. The "Rules Relating to Police Surveillance" provide that the maximum term of exile without trial shall be five years. but since 1888 this term has been extended arbitrarily to ten years, and politically suspicious or untrustworthy persons have been banished without trial for that length of time to the very worst part of the Yakútsk territory, viz... the strictly arctic settlements of Verkhoyánsk and Srédni Among such exiles, whose names and photo-Kolímsk. graphs have been sent to me, are Alexéi Makaréfski, a student from the Veterinary Institute at Kharkof, and another student named Ivan Tsítsenko. The territory of Yakútsk, moreover, has been made, since 1888, the place of banishment for all Jewish suspects, without regard to the nature of their supposed untrustworthiness, and without regard to age or sex. Among such exiles, whose names and photographs have been sent to me, are two young girls, Rosa Frank and Vera Sheftel, who were students in one of the high medical schools for women in St. Petersburg, and who were banished to Srédni Kolímsk for three and five years respectively in 1888. They can hardly expect, of course, to live to return to their homes.

Two of the most interesting politicals whom we met in Irkútsk were Mr. and Mrs. Iván Cherniávski, who were banished to Siberia by administrative process in 1878. I became very well acquainted with them, and for Mrs. Cherniávski especially I came to feel the profoundest pity and regard. Few women, even in Russia, have had before the age of thirty-five so tragic and heart-breaking a life, and still fewer have maintained through hardships, sickness, and bereavement such cheerfulness and courage. She was arrested in Odessa in the early part of 1878 at the age of about twenty-five, and after a long term of imprisonment was sent by administrative process to the province of Tobólsk. In the city prison of Kiev, on her way to Siberia, she was detained for a few days, and while there was

forced to be almost an eye-witness of the assassination of her dearest friend. A young man of English descent named Beverly, whom she had known from childhood, had been arrested shortly before upon the charge of living on a false passport and carrying on a revolutionary propaganda, and he was at that time in the Kiev prison. The night before Mrs. Cherniávski was to resume her journey to Siberia, Beverly, with a comrade named Izbítski, attempted to escape through a tunnel which they had succeeded in digging from their cell to a point outside the prison wall. The prison authorities, however, had in some way become aware of the existence of the tunnel, and had posted a squad of soldiers near the place where the fugitives must emerge from the ground. Late at night, when they made their appearance, they were received with a volley of musketry. Beverly was mortally wounded, and as he lay writhing on the ground he was despatched by a soldier with repeated bayonet-thrusts. Izbítski, wounded and severely beaten, was taken back into prison. The next morning when Mrs. Cherniávski started with her party for Siberia she had to march past the bloody and disfigured body of her dearest friend, which was still lying where it had fallen, in plain sight of the prison windows.

"I can bear my own personal torment," she said to me with a sob as she finished the story of this tragedy, "but such things as that break my heart."

I need not recount the hardships and miseries that she, a cultivated and refined woman, endured on the road and in the roadside étapes between Kiev and the small town in the Siberian province of Tobólsk where she and her husband had been assigned a residence. They reached their destination at last; a child was there born to them, and they lived there in something like comfort until March, 1881, when Alexander III. came to the throne and Mr. Cherniávski was required to take the oath of allegiance. He refused to do so, and they were sent farther eastward to the town of

Krasnovársk. A second refusal to take the oath of allegiance resulted in their being sent to Irkútsk. By this time winter had set in, and they were traveling in an open tárantás with a delicate baby thirteen months of age. It was with the greatest difficulty that Mrs. Cherniávski could keep her baby warm, and at the last station before reaching Irkútsk she removed the heavy wrappings in which she had enveloped it and found it dead. With the shock of this discovery she became delirious, and wept, sang pathetic little nursery songs to her dead child, rocked it in her arms, and prayed and cursed God by turns. In the courtyard of the Irkútsk forwarding prison, in a temperature of thirty degrees below zero, Mr. Cherniávski stood for half an hour waiting for the party to be formally received, with his wife raving in delirium beside him and his dead child in his arms.

Mrs. Cherniávski lay in the prison hospital at Irkútsk until she recovered her reason, and to some extent her strength, and then she and her husband were sent 2000 miles farther to the northeastward under guard of gendarmes, and colonized in a Yakút settlement known as the Batarúski ulús, situated in the taigá or primeval wilderness of Yakútsk, 165 miles from the nearest town. There, suffering almost every conceivable hardship and privation, they lived until 1884, when the Minister of the Interior allowed them to return to a more civilized part of Siberia.

Mrs. Cherniávski when I made her acquaintance was a pale, delicate, hollow-cheeked woman, whose health had been completely wrecked by years of imprisonment, banishment, and grief. She had had two children, and had lost them both in exile under circumstances that made the bereavement almost intolerable; for seven years she had been separated by a distance of many thousand miles from all of her kindred; and the future seemed to hold for her absolutely nothing except the love of the husband whose exile she could still share, but whose interest she could do so little

in her broken state of health to promote. She had not been able to step outside the house for two months, and it seemed to me, when I bade her good-by, that her life of unhappiness and suffering was drawing to a close. I felt profoundly sorry for her,—while listening to her story my face was wet with tears almost for the first time since boyhood,—and hoping to give her some pleasure and to show her how sincerely I esteemed her and how deeply I sympathized with her, I offered her my photograph, as the only memento I could leave with her. To my great surprise she sadly but firmly declined it, and said, "Many years ago I had a photograph of a little child that I had lost. It was the only one in existence, and I could not get another. The police made a search one night in my house, and took away all my letters and photographs. I told them that this particular picture was the only portrait I had of my dead boy. The gendarme officer who conducted the search promised me upon his word of honor that it should be returned to me, but I never saw it again. I made a vow then that it should not be possible for the Russian Government to hurt me so a second time, and from that day to this I have never had a photograph in my possession."

I do not know whether Mrs. Cherniávski is now living or dead; but if she be still living, I trust that these pages may find their way to her and show her that on the other side of the world she is still remembered with affectionate sympathy.

CHAPTER II

UNDER POLICE SURVEILLANCE

N order that I may set forth in a connected and intelli-**I** gible form the results of my investigation of the Russian exile system, I find myself compelled, at this point, to break the continuity of my narrative, and to bring together, in a single chapter, a quantity of material relating to only one branch of my subject, but gathered piecemeal, at different times and in many widely separated parts of Siberia. To present a large number of closely related facts in the chronological order in which they were obtained would be to scatter them through half a dozen chapters, and thus deprive them of much of their cumulative force and significance. It seems best, therefore, to group such facts in a single chapter dealing exclusively with that particular feature of the subject to which they all relate. In a previous chapter, entitled "Exiled by Administrative Process," I grouped a number of related facts to show the working of what is known in Russia as the "administrative" banishment of political offenders. I purpose, in the present chapter, to group in a similar way a few facts with regard to the life of political offenders under police surveillance in the places to which they have been administratively banished.

The forcible deportation of "politically untrustworthy" citizens by executive order and without trial first became common in the later years of the reign of Alexander II. Administrative banishment had been resorted to, as I have said, before that time as a means of getting rid of obnoxious

30 siberia

persons, but in 1878 and 1879, when the struggle between the police and the terrorists grew hot and fierce, exile by administrative process became a common thing, and people who were known to hold liberal opinions, or who were thought to be in sympathy with the revolutionary movement, were sent to Siberia by the score. If forbidden books, or copies of the "Messenger of the Will of the People," were found by the police in a young man's room, the fact was regarded as a sufficient warrant for his banishment. If an enthusiastic university student, inspired with an unselfish desire to do something to elevate the lower classes, ventured to open an evening school for factory operatives in the suburbs of St. Petersburg, he was sent to Siberia by administrative process. If a dozen or more young people were surprised together at night under suspicious circumstances, their names were recorded in the "untrustworthy" list of the police, and the next time the Government found it necessary to "take more vigorous measures for the preservation of public order," these unfortunate young men and women, who perhaps had assembled merely to read and discuss the works of Herbert Spencer or of John Stuart Mill, were arrested and sent to Siberia as conspirators. Friends and relatives of convicted revolutionists were banished by administrative process as a matter of course, and long before the assassination of Alexander II. six or eight hundred young people, representing all classes and all social grades, had been swept into the prisons by the drag-net of the police, and sent thence to Siberia by administrative process without even the pretense of a trial. Before the end of the year 1889 there was hardly a town or large village in Western Siberia that did not contain administrative exiles, and there were whole colonies of such offenders in

exile. (Review of the "Rules Relating to Police Surveillance," in magazine *Juridical Messenger*, p. 557. Moscow, December, 1882.)

¹ In 1882 the number of persons who had been dealt with by administrative process and were living under police surveillance was officially given as 1500. Most of these people were in

Tára, Tiukalínsk, Ishím, Yalútorfsk, Semipalátinsk, Kókchetav, Akmolínsk, Kurgán, Surgút, Ust Kámenogórsk, Omsk, Tomsk, and Berózof.

No rules for the government of these exiles were at that time in force. Banishment by administrative process was, in a certain sense, an extra-legal measure—a measure not defined and regulated by legislative enactment, but rather set in operation and directed by personal impulse. As a natural consequence it was pliant, changeable, and wholly subservient to the will of the higher authorities. By administrative process a man might be banished to Siberia for a year, for ten years, or for life; he might be sent to the hot sun-scorched plains of the Irtish, or to the snowy wilderness of Yakútsk; he might be treated like an infant ward, like a forced colonist, or like a hard-labor convict: and, as against the Minister of the Interior, he had not a single legally sanctioned and enforceable right. His situation was in many respects worse than that of a common felon. The latter knew at least how long and for what reason he had to suffer; his political status was definitely fixed by law, and to some extent he was protected by law from capricious ill-treatment at the hands of petty Siberian officials. The administrative exile, however, had no such protection. He stood wholly outside the pale of promulgated law; his term of banishment was not fixed, but could be indefinitely extended by the authorities at pleasure; he had no ascertainable rights, either as a citizen or as a criminal, and no means of knowing whether the local officials in dealing with him overstepped or did not overstep the limits of their rightful authority. The only checks upon their power, so far as he was concerned, were the "secret" letters of instruction that they received now and then from the Minister of the Interior. Even these checks were nominal rather than real, since the letters were often inconsistent one with another; they did not provide for half of the multifarious cases that arose; and the local authorities,

when in doubt, acted upon their own judgment, and when irritated or excited disregarded the letters of instruction altogether. The natural results of such a state of affairs were confusion, disorder, and constant abuse of power. In one place the administrative exiles were required to appear every day at the police-station, sign their names in a book, and report personally to the *isprávnik*; in another place they were subjected to a constant and humiliating surveillance, which did not respect even the privacy of young women's bedrooms. One isprávnik would allow them to earn a little money by teaching or practising medicine, while another would throw them into prison for merely giving a music lesson or prescribing a single dose of quinine. An exile in Ust Kámenogórsk might go three or four miles from his place of banishment without receiving so much as a reprimand, while another exile, in Ishim, might be sent to an ulús in the province of Yakútsk for merely walking two hundred yards into the woods to pick berries. Everywhere there were irregularities, inconsistencies, and misunderstandings which brought the administrative exiles almost daily into collision with the local authorities.

This state of things continued until the year 1882, when the present Tsar approved a code of rules for the government of all persons living at home or in exile under police surveillance.¹ I purpose to review briefly this Code, and then to illustrate, by means of selected cases, its bearing upon the life of administrative exiles in Siberia. The Code comprises forty sections and fills five closely printed octavo pages; and it is a somewhat singular fact that, although its provisions relate almost wholly to persons who have been administratively banished, they do not contain anywhere the word "exile," nor the word "banishment," nor the word "Siberia." The author of the Code seems to have been ashamed to let it clearly and definitely appear that these

¹ Polozhénie o Politséskom Nadzóre [Rules Relating to Police Surveillance].

Approved by the Tsar, March 12, 1882.

are regulations for the government of men and women who have been torn from their homes and banished without trial to the remotest parts of Siberia. The only suggestion of exile in the whole document is contained in the words:

Police surveillance, over persons assigned to definite places of residence, takes effect by virtue of such assignment, and for the period of residence fixed. [Sect. 2.]

There is nothing whatever in these colorless words to indicate that the "definite places of residence" to which the offending "persons" have been "assigned" may be situated within the arctic circle, 5000 miles east of St. Petersburg; and I am confident that an uninstructed reader might commit the whole Code to memory without even suspecting that it relates to men and women who have been banished without trial to the wild frontiers of Mongolia, or to Yakút ulúses near the Asiatic pole of cold. The author of the Rules has made police surveillance the most prominent feature of his legislation, and has artfully hidden behind it, in the background, what he euphemistically calls "assigned to definite places of residence."

It might have startled the moral sense even of the Russian community if he had entitled his Code, as he ought to have entitled it, "Rules to govern the behavior of men and women exiled without trial to Siberia by the Minister of the Interior." The plain, blunt words, "exile without trial to Siberia," sound badly; but there is nothing to shock the most sensitive mind in the periphrastic statement that "Persons prejudicial to public tranquillity may be assigned by administrative process to definite places of residence."

When one is told that a Russian citizen, not accused of any crime, may be arrested by the police, may be sent, by virtue of a mere executive order, to a peasant village in Siberia, and may be forced to reside there for a term of years, one naturally asks, "What are the conditions of the life that such a person is compelled to live? What pro-

vision does the law make for his support? What is he allowed to do? What is he forbidden to do? and How in general is he treated?" To each of these questions the "Rules Relating to Police Surveillance" furnish an answer; and as the official replies to such questions naturally carry more weight than the replies that might be made by the banished persons themselves, I will briefly summarize the Code, which administrative exiles sometimes humorously call their "Constitution," or "Bill of Rights." It is as follows:

The maximum limit of banishment with police surveillance shall henceforth be five years. [Sect. 3.]

As soon as an exile reaches his destination he shall be deprived of his passport, and shall be furnished with another document setting forth his name, rank, and previous residence, and giving notice to all concerned that he is authorized to live in the village of X—. [Sect. 5.]

He shall not leave the place to which he has been banished without permission from the proper authorities; and if he move from one house to another, he shall notify the police within twenty-four hours. [Sect. 7.]

He may be allowed to absent himself temporarily, in a case of particularly urgent importance, if his behavior has been such as to meet the approval of the police; but in every such case he shall obtain the permission of the governor before going outside the limits of the district, and the permission of the Minister of the Interior before going outside the limits of the province. [Sect. 8.]

An administrative exile to whom such permission has been granted must be provided with a pass and a detailed description of the route to be followed; he shall not stop on the way unless sick or unable to proceed, in which case he must give notice at once to the nearest authorities; he shall report to the police in every town or village through which he passes; and he may be sent back to his place of banishment at any time and from any point in his journey, without regard to his permit, if his behavior shall seem to be suspicious. [Sects. 9–16.]

Administrative exiles shall always report in person to the police at the first summons. [Sect. 17.]

The local police authorities shall have the right to enter the house or room of an administrative exile at any hour of the day or night, and they shall also have the right to search such house or room and to take away any of its contents. [Sect. 19.]

Administrative exiles shall not hold any position in the service of the state or of society, and shall not do any writing for any state, municipal, or other institution, without special permission from the Minister of the Interior. [Sect. 21.]

Administrative exiles shall not be the founders, the presiding officers, nor the members of any private society or company; and they shall not act as guardians, or as curators, without permission from the Minister of the Interior. [Sects. 22, 23.]

Administrative exiles are forbidden to engage in any kind of pedagogic work; they are forbidden to give instruction in the arts or trades to scholars or apprentices; they are forbidden to deliver lectures or public addresses; they are forbidden to take part in public meetings of scientific societies; they are forbidden to participate in theatrical performances or scenic representations; and they are forbidden, generally, to exercise any public activity. They are also forbidden to have anything to do, in the capacity either of proprietor, overseer, clerk, or laborer, with any photograph gallery, lithographic establishment, printing-office, or library; they are forbidden to deal in books or other productions of the press; they are forbidden to keep tea-houses or grog-shops; and they are forbidden to trade in any way in intoxicating liquor. [Sect. 24.]

Administrative exiles shall not be received into state, municipal, or private schools, or educational institutions, without special permission from the Minister of the Interior, approved by the educational authorities. [Sect. 25.]

Administrative exiles shall not appear and plead in the courts except in behalf of themselves, their parents, their wives, or their children. They shall not act as physicians, accoucheurs, apothecaries, or chemists, without permission from the Minister of the Interior. [Sects. 26, 27.]

All lawful occupations, not above mentioned, shall, as a rule, be open to administrative exiles; but the governor of the province may nevertheless, in his discretion, forbid an exile to engage in any business that may, by virtue of local conditions, enable such exile to attain illegal ends, or render him a menace to public peace and order. [Sect. 28.]

The Minister of the Interior shall have the right to withhold from administrative exiles all letters and telegrams, and to subject

their whole correspondence—including both letters written and letters received—to police supervision. [Sect. 29.]

Failure to submit to any of the rules set forth in Sections 11-29 shall be punished with imprisonment for a period of not less than three days nor more than one month. Administrative exiles who leave their places of banishment without permission may also be tried and punished under Section 63 of the Code providing for offenses within the jurisdiction of justices of the peace. [Sect. 32.]

Administrative exiles who have no pecuniary means of their own shall receive an allowance from the Government treasury for their support, and for the support of their families, if the latter voluntarily go with them to their places of banishment. This allowance, however, shall not be made to exiles who fail to obtain employment through bad conduct or habitual laziness. [Sects. 33–37.]

Administrative exiles and their families shall be treated in the local hospitals, when sick, at the expense of the Government. [Sect. 38.]

Administrative exiles who may not have means to defray the expense of return to their homes at the expiration of their terms of banishment shall receive aid from the Government, in accordance with the imperial order of January 10, 1881, unless special directions with regard to the return of such persons shall have been given by the Minister of the Interior. [Sect. 40.]

Such, in brief, is the administrative exiles? "Constitution." I have everywhere substituted the words "administrative exiles," "banishment," and "places of banishment," for the ambiguous or misleading expressions, "persons under police surveillance," "assignment to definite places of residence," and "places of domiciliation," which are used in the text; but in so doing I have merely given clearer expression to the real meaning of the Code. Men and women banished by administrative process are not known to Russian law as "exiles." They are pod-nadzórni, or "persons under surveillance," and their banishment is called by a euphemistic legal fiction vodvorénia, or "domiciliation" in "definite places of residence." It must, of course, mitigate the grief of a bereaved mother to learn from a perusal of this law that her only son has not been "exiled," but merely "domiciled" in

an "assigned place of residence" near the spot where Captain De Long and the sailors of the *Jeannette* perished from cold and hunger.

When an administrative exile, after weeks or months of travel "by étape," reaches at last the Siberian town or village to which he has been "assigned," and in which he is to be "domiciled," he is conducted to the police-station, is furnished with an identifying document called a vid na zhitelstvo, or "permit to reside," and receives, from the isprávnik or the zasedátel, a printed copy of the "Rules Relating to Police Surveillance." He is informed at the same time that he cannot go outside the limits of the village without permission; that his correspondence is "under control," and that, as a precaution against escape, he will be required to report personally at stated intervals to the chief of police, or will be visited as often as may be necessary by an officer detailed to watch him. His first need, of course, is shelter; and taking his exile passport and his copy of the "Rules" in his hand he goes in search of a "domicile." The fact that he is a political exile is not stated in his "permit to reside," but everybody knows it,—he has been seen to arrive in the village under guard,—and householders are naturally unwilling or reluctant to give him lodgings. A political exile is presumably a dangerous man, and, moreover, a man who is liable to be visited at all hours of the day and night by the police. A peasant villager does not care to have his house invaded every day, and perhaps half a dozen times a day, by a suspicious police officer; and besides that, he (the householder) may be required to watch the movements of his dangerous lodger, and at inconvenient times may be summoned to the police-station to answer questions. In view of these unpleasant possibilities, he thinks it safest not to have anything to do with a person about whom nothing is known except that he is a state criminal under police surveillance. As the tired political goes from house to house, seeking lodgings, and as he finds himself regarded

everywhere with fear or suspicion, he understands and appreciates the feeling that impels a common criminal colonist to call an exile's "permit to reside" a "wolf's passport."

At last, with the aid perhaps of other political exiles, he finds and rents a single scantily furnished room in the house of some poor peasant, unpacks his portmanteau, and proceeds to make the acquaintance of his environment. first and most important question that arises in his mind is the question of subsistence. How is he to live? He has left his wife and young children entirely unprovided for in European Russia; he has long been tortured by a vivid consciousness of their helpless and destitute condition. and now he finds himself suddenly confronted with the question of maintenance for himself. What is he to do? He examines the "Rules Relating to Police Surveillance," and learns from Section 33 that "administrative exiles who have no pecuniary means of their own shall receive an allowance from the Government treasury for their support." This "allowance," as he soon ascertains, is six rúbles, or a little less than three dollars, a month. He makes inquiries in the town or village market-place, and finds, as the result of his investigations, that if he receives the Government allowance, and buys only the things that he regards as absolutely essential to life, his monthly budget will stand as follows:1

RECEIPTS.	EXPENDITURES.
·	Rent of a single room \$1.00 40 lbs. of meat 1.50 40 lbs. of wheat flour .58 40 lbs. of rye flour .33 10 eggs .12 A "brick" of tea — cheapest .79 1 lb. of sugar .10 1 lb. of tobacco, cheapest sort .25 1 lb. kerosene .05
\$4.72	\$4.72

exile balance-sheet, and the prices are Siberia, in the spring of 1888. those that prevailed in the town of

¹ This is a real, not an imaginary Surgút, province of Tobólsk, Western

From this balance-sheet it appears that although an administrative exile in the province of Tobólsk limits himself to the barest essentials of life, spends nothing for service, for washing, for fuel, or for medicines, and uses only five cents' worth of kerosene, and ten cents' worth of sugar in a month, he exceeds by \$1.72 his monthly allowance. It is evident, therefore, that the question of personal maintenance is not to be solved in this way. The thoughts of the exile then turn naturally to employment. He cannot expect, of course, to find in a remote Siberian village as many opportunities for the exercise of trained intellectual ability as he might find in St. Petersburg or Moscow; but he does not insist upon profitable employment, or even upon employment that shall be pleasant and congenial; he is ready to undertake work of any kind that will enable him to keep soul and body together. He has had a university training; he knows three or four languages; he is, perhaps, a skilful physician and surgeon like Dr. Biéli in Verkhoyánsk, a photographer like Mr. Karélin in Ust Kámenogórsk, or a journalist like Mr. Belokónski in Minusínsk; he is an expert penman, a good accountant, a competent teacher, and a fair musician. It seems to him that he can hardly fail, even in Siberia, to earn fifty cents a day; and fifteen dollars a month would enable him to live in comparative decency and comfort. However, upon again consulting the "Rules Relating to Police Surveillance," he finds that he is strictly forbidden, under pain of imprisonment, to act in the capacity of teacher, doctor, chemist, photographer, lithographer, librarian, copyist, editor, compositor, contributor, reporter, lecturer, actor, lawyer, bookseller, or clerk. He cannot hold any position in the service of the state or of society; he cannot be an officer or a partner in any commercial company; he cannot be a member of any scientific body; he cannot have anything to do with drugs, medicines, photographic or lithographic materials, books, weapons, or newspapers; and, finally, he cannot "exercise any public

activity." What is there left for an educated man to do? All the pursuits for which his life and previous training have qualified him are absolutely closed to him. He has not the manual skill necessary to fit him for the work of a carpenter, a shoemaker, a wheelwright, or a blacksmith; he cannot turn merchant or trader, for lack of the requisite capital; and he cannot become a driver or a teamster, on account of his inability to leave the village to which he has been assigned. The only occupation, therefore, that seems to be open to him is the cultivation of the soil. The "Rules Relating to Police Surveillance" do not forbid him to raise potatoes, turnips, and cabbages,—there is no danger that he will infect the soil with his "seditious" ideas,—and in agricultural labor he determines to seek a solution of the hard problem of life. He soon learns, however, that all of the arable land in the neighborhood of the village belongs to the village commune, and has already been allotted to its members. He cannot find a single acre of unappropriated soil without going four or five versts away, and if he steps outside the narrow limits of the settlement he renders himself liable to arrest and imprisonment. In this disheartening situation—banished to Siberia and tied hand and foot by the "Rules Relating to Police Surveillance—he can do absolutely nothing except make an appeal to the governor, the governor-general, or the Minister of the Interior, and beg, as a favor, for a recognition of his right to labor for his daily bread.

In 1883 the political exiles in the town of Akmolínsk applied to General Kolpakófski, the governor-general of the steppe territories, for permission to give music lessons. They found it almost impossible, they said, either to live on the Government allowance, or to support themselves by any of the means that the "Rules" left open to them. They could, however, teach music, and they begged to be allowed to do so. This seemed—or would seem to an American—a very modest, natural, and reasonable request. There is

nothing "dangerous" or "prejudicial to public order" in a piano, and it was hardly to be supposed that Siberian children would become nihilists as a result of learning fivefinger exercises. Governor-general Kolpakófski, however, either thought that the petitioners would undermine the loyalty of the children of Akmolínsk by teaching them revolutionary songs, or believed that destitution and misery are the natural and proper concomitants of administrative exile. He therefore replied to the letter by saying that teaching was an occupation forbidden by the "Rules Relating to Police Surveillance," and that if the administrative exiles in Akmolínsk needed work, in order to obtain the necessaries of life, they might "hire themselves out to the Kírghis, who pay from five to seven cents a day for laborers." This was almost as cruel and insulting as it would be to tell post-graduate students of the Johns Hopkins University, who had been banished without trial to the mountains of the Sierra Nevada, that if they needed employment they might catch grasshoppers for the Digger Indians.

About the same time, the political exiles in Ust Kámenogórsk asked General Kolpakófski for permission to occupy and cultivate a tract of Government land near their place of banishment. They offered to improve the land, to pay rent for it as soon as it should become productive, and to leave all their improvements to the state, without reimbursement, at the expiration of their term of exile. This. again, was a reasonable proposition, and, moreover, a proposition advantageous in every way to the state. The governor-general, however, made to it the same reply that he had made to the petition of the administrative exiles in Akmolínsk, viz., that if they needed work they might hire themselves out as day-laborers to the Cossacks.1

¹ These illustrations of official harshments I have every reason to trust.

ness and indifference were given to me I did not meet General Kólpakofski in writing by a political exile in the province of Semipalátinsk whose state-knowledge of his character; but I did

The "Rules Relating to Police Surveillance" are not enforced with uniform strictness at all times, nor in all parts of Siberia, and the extent to which they debar exiles from employment is largely dependent upon the character of the officials who are intrusted with their enforcement. General Tseklínski, the late governor of the territory of Semipalátinsk, treated the exiles in his jurisdiction with humanity and consideration; not because he was in sympathy with their views, but simply because he was a gentleman and a humane and considerate officer. The same statement may justly be made, I think, with regard to Mr. Nathaniel Petukhóf, who at the time of my visit was acting-governor of the province of Tomsk. In the province of Tobólsk, on the other hand, the administrative exiles have always been treated with harshness, and at times with brutal severity. In April, 1888, the political exiles in the town of Surgút, to the number of nineteen men, addressed a respectful letter to the Minister of the Interior, protesting against the treatment to which they were subjected, declaring that their situation had become insupportable, and solemnly giving notice that, whatever might be the consequences, they would no longer submit. A copy of this protest has been sent to me from Siberia, and lies before me as I write. It is too long to be quoted here, but a translation of it will be found in Appendix C. How desperate the situation of these exiles must have been appears from the fact that some of them had almost finished their terms of banishment, and had only to suffer a little longer without complaint in order to be free; but

meet there the governor of the terri- these came under my direct personal tory of Akmolinsk, and he impressed me as a man who would be quite capable of preparing for the governor-general's signature just such a letter as that which was sent to the Akmolinsk exiles in response to their petition for leave to teach music. In some parts of Eastern Siberia official acts even more extraordinary and incredible than

observation.

¹ Surgút is a small town of 1300 inhabitants, situated on the right bank of the river Ob, in the province of Tobólsk about five degrees south of the arctic circle. It is 575 miles northeast of the city of Tobólsk, and 2500 miles from St. Petersburg.

they could suffer no longer. There is a limit to human endurance, and that limit the Surgut exiles had reached. All that I know of their fate, and of the result of their protest, I learn from a brief paragraph in the Siberian Gazette, which announces that "nineteen audaciously impudent political exiles" in the town of Surgut "have been removed"; and that the isprávnik of Surgut and the chief of police of Tobólsk have been officially "thanked" by the provincial governor, Mr. Troínítski, for the distinguished services rendered by them on the occasion of this "removal." To what lonely and far-away corner of Siberia these nineteen unfortunate politicals have been sent for their "audaciously impudent" attempt to touch the heart and awaken the sympathies of Count Dmítri Tolstói, the Minister of the Interior, I do not know. There are only a few "places of domiciliation" worse than Surgut. One of them is Berózof, near the mouth of the river Ob, 2700 miles from St. Petersburg; another is Turukhánsk, a "town" of 32 houses and 181 inhabitants situated near the arctic circle. 4100 miles from St. Petersburg; and the third is the dreaded province of Yákútsk.1

The administrative exile who, upon reaching his place of banishment, finds himself within the jurisdiction of a governor like Mr. Troinítski is probably forced by imperious necessity to petition the Minister of the Interior for relief. He is without pecuniary means of his own; he cannot live on the allowance of three dollars a month made to him by the state; and the "Rules Relating to Police Surveillance" are enforced by the governor with such pitiless severity that a man who is subject to them cannot possibly earn his daily bread and at the same time keep out of jail. Under such circumstances the banished political offender, who perhaps is a physician, writes to the Minister of the Interior a

¹ To these places are sent political "audaciously impudent" complaints to Siberia, manifest an insubordinate Interior. disposition, or, in other words, address

offenders who, after their banishment of ill-treatment to the Minister of the

statement of the facts, informs his Excellency that there is no physician in the town or village to which he (the exile) has been assigned, and asks if he cannot be allowed to resume the practice of his profession. This, apparently, is even more than a reasonable request. The petitioner is a trained and skilful physician. He is living perhaps in a district containing twenty thousand inhabitants, scattered over hundreds of square miles, and urgently in need of medical advice and help.¹ To an American it would seem as if the request of an exiled physician to be allowed to practise in such a country as this must not only be granted, but be welcomed with gratitude. Does the Minister of the Interior so treat it?

In 1883 the Medical Society of the city of Tver² sent a memorial to the Minister of the Interior setting forth the facts with regard to the lack of medical assistance and the urgent need of trained medical officers in Siberia, calling his Excellency's attention to the large number of physicians and medical students living in that part of the empire under sentence of banishment, and asking whether the Government would not consider favorably a suggestion that such physicians and medical students be exempted from the disabilities imposed by Section 27 of the "Rules Relating to Police Surveillance," and be allowed to practise in the provinces to which they had been banished. Nothing cer-

country. The adoption of measures to prevent the spread of disease among cattle is out of the question. Immense numbers of cattle die every year from plague, causing the people incalculable loss." (Second report of Governor-general Anúchin to the Tsar; section entitled "The Construction and Medical Departments.")

² Tver is a city of European Russia, situated on the Nikoláievsk railroad a short distance from Moscow. It is the capital of the province of the same name.

¹ In a report made by the governorgeneral of Eastern Siberia to the Tsar in 1881, a copy of which is in my possession, it is stated that "the number of physicians in the country is utterly insufficient. I shall not depart from the truth if I say that in the cities only is there any possibility of taking medical measures for the preservation of the health of the people. In every other part of Eastern Siberia physicians are almost wholly lacking, and the local population is left helpless in its struggle with diphtheria and other contagious diseases which desolate the

tainly could have been more wise and humane; nothing could have been more worthy of respectful consideration than such a suggestion from such a source. With what reception did it meet? I am sorry to say that it met with swift punishment. For sending this memorial to the Minister of the Interior—for venturing to intercede in behalf of physicians banished upon suspicion of political "untrustworthiness"—the Medical Society of Tver was closed and forbidden to hold further meetings, and two of its members who happened to be in the service of the state as surgeons in the Tver hospital were summarily dismissed from their places.¹

If persons who merely suggest that exiled physicians be allowed to practise are punished in this way by the Minister of the Interior, one can imagine how exiled physicians themselves who practise without permission are punished by that minister's subordinates.

In the year 1880 there was living in the city of Kharkóf a young medical student named Nifónt Dólgopólof. He had finished his course of instruction in the medical faculty of the Kharkóf University, and was about to take his final examination, when there occurred one of the scenes of tumult and disorder that are so common in Russian universities, when a large number of students, excited by some real or fancied grievance, undertake to hold an indignation meeting in the street opposite the university buildings. In Kharkóf, on the occasion to which I refer, the disturbance became so serious that the university authorities were unable to deal with it, and a troop of mounted Cossacks was sent to break up the meeting and to disperse the mob of excited undergraduates. Irritated by the resistance that they encountered, and determined to clear the street at all hazards, the Cossacks rode through the crowd of hooting students, striking right and left at random with the short,

¹ My authorities for the facts of this case are four or five citizens of Tver, including two members of the Tver Medical Society.

hinged riding-whips known in Russia as nagáikas. Mr. Dólgopólof, who was not a revolutionist, nor even an "untrustworthy" person, had nothing to do with the disorder; but he happened to be present in the street as a spectator, and when the Cossacks began using their whips he turned to a chinóvnik—an officer of the civil service—who stood near him, and exclaimed indignantly, "You ought to be ashamed of yourselves! It is cowardly and disgraceful to strike men with whips!" The chinóvnik called the attention of the police to Mr. Dólgopólof, and caused him to be arrested and thrown into prison as a person who was aiding and abetting the disorder. Some months later the young medical student, without even the pretense of a trial, was exiled by administrative process to the town of Kurgán, in Western Siberia. In March, 1881, he was required to take the oath of allegiance to the new Tsar, Alexander III., and as a punishment for refusing to do so was sent to the town of Tiukalínsk. At that time the isprávnik of Tiukalínsk was a hot-tempered, unscrupulous, and brutal man named Ílyin; and with this official the young medical student soon came into collision. The first skirmish grew out of Dr. Dólgopólof's failure to obey strictly the "Rules Relating to Police Surveillance." He was a man of generous and

¹ There was nothing extraordinary in this method of breaking up a street meeting of indignant students. It was common enough at that time, and it has often been resorted to since. Precisely in this way began, on the 26th of November, 1887, the notorious revolt of the students in Moscow, which led eventually to the closing of all the great universities in the empire. A peaceful meeting of students on the Strástnoi Boulevard had been broken up by a sótnia of Cossacks with whips, under circumstances that made the outrage absolutely intolerable. The sufferers sent a circular letter of complaint and protest to their fellow-students in St. Petersburg, Kazán, Kiev, Kharkóf, and Odessa; the excitement

extended, with growing intensity, from university to university; and the agitation finally culminated in the "going out" of 10,000 students and the arrest, rustication, or exile of more than 1000. The Russian Government attributes the spread of "nihilism" in the empire to the efforts of a few desperate fanatics and assassins who seek to overthrow all existing institutions. It is, perhaps, pertinent to inquire whether the horse-whipping of university students in the streets may not have some remote bearing upon the distressing phenomenon, and whether it may not explain to some extent the lamentable state of affairs that forces a naturally benevolent government to send its erring subjects to Siberia without trial.

sympathetic disposition, as well as a skilful surgeon, and he found it extremely difficult at times to avoid acting in a professional capacity. He never sought practice, nor made it a means of support; but when a peasant in the incipient stage of typhus fever asked him for advice, or a man suffering from cataract came to him for relief, he gave the requisite advice, or performed the necessary operation, without pay, simply because he regarded the rendering of such service as a duty imposed upon him by humanity. The fame of Dr. Dólgopólof's cures soon reached the isprávnik, and that official, summoning the young surgeon to the policestation, called his attention in an offensive manner to Section 27 of the "Rules," and forbade him thereafter, upon pain of arrest and imprisonment, to treat sick peasants under any circumstances, with pay or without pay. Dólgopólof, after some hot words, submitted, and discontinued entirely his irregular and unauthorized practice; but his relations with the isprávnik at once became hostile. At that time the mayor of Tiukalínsk was a prominent and wealthy merchant named Balákhin. In the autumn of 1883 Mr. Balákhin's son, while handling a revolver, accidentally shot his mother in the leg. The wound was a dangerous one, and the extraction of the ball would necessitate a difficult surgical operation. The only regular physician in the place, a nervous and rather timid man named Hull, was called in, and succeeded in stopping the hemorrhage from the cut artery; but he declined to undertake the operation for the removal of the ball, and advised Mr. Balákhin to send for Dr. Dólgopólof. "He is a skilful surgeon," said the local practitioner, "and I am not. He can do what is necessary far better than I can, and I don't like to undertake so serious an operation." Mr. Balákhin thereupon hastened to Dr. Dólgopólof and asked his aid.

"I am not allowed to practise," said the young surgeon.
"But this may be a case of life or death," urged Mr.
Balákhin

"I can't help it," replied Dr. Dólgopólof; "my relations with the *isprávnik* are strained. I have already been once in trouble for practising without authority; and I have been strictly forbidden to act professionally, under any circumstances whatever, upon pain of imprisonment."

"You were exiled to Siberia," said Mr. Balákhin, desperately, "for your humanity—because you showed sympathy with people in distress. Have you not courage and humanity enough now to come to the help of a suffering woman, even though you may be imprisoned for it?"

"If you put the question in that way," replied Dr. Dólgopólof, "I have. I will perform the operation and take the punishment."

Upon making an examination, Dr. Dólgopólof found that Mrs. Balákhina was not in immediate danger, and he thereupon suggested that a telegram be sent to Governor Lisogórski, at Tobólsk, asking that Dr. Dólgopólof be authorized to perform a grave surgical operation which the local practitioner declined to undertake. The telegram was sent, and in an hour an answer came, saying that the case was not one over which the governor had jurisdiction, and directing the mayor to apply for the desired permission to the medical department of the Ministry of the Interior.

"You see," said Dr. Dólgopólof, contemptuously, to Mr. Balákhin, "how much regard your rulers have for human life."

He then performed the operation, extracted the ball, tied up the artery, and left Mrs. Balákhina comfortable and out of danger. On the following day the *isprávnik*, Ílyin, caused the young surgeon to be arrested and thrown into prison, and began proceedings in a case which still stands on record in the archives of the province of Tobólsk as "The affair of the unauthorized extraction of a bullet, by the administrative exile Nifónt Dólgopólof, from the leg of Madam Balákhina, wife of the mayor of Tiukalínsk." While these proceedings dragged along in the Circumlocution Office of the

provincial administration at Tobólsk, Dr. Dólgopólof lay in the foul district prison at Tiukalínsk, where he finally con-

tracted typhus fever.1

Of course the case of Dr. Dólgopólof excited intense feeling in the little provincial town, and when he was taken sick, people came to the prison every day to inquire about him and to bring him food or flowers. These manifestations of public sympathy were not without their effect even upon the isprávnik, and, in view of them, that official finally ordered that the young surgeon be released and taken to his home. At the same time, however, he wrote officially to Governor Lisogórski that the administrative exile Nifónt Dólgopólof, while awaiting trial upon a criminal charge, was exerting a very dangerous and pernicious influence in the town: that people were showing him sympathy by bringing him food and flowers; and that this sympathy would very likely go even to the extent of furnishing him with means of escape. Under such circumstances he (the isprávnik) felt burdened with a responsibility that he. thought should not be laid upon him, and he begged leave to suggest to his Excellency that the prisoner be removed forthwith to the town of Surgut or to some other part of the province where he would not be known, and where he might be more securely guarded. There was not an intimation in the letter that Dr. Dólgopólof was lying dangerously ill from typhus fever; and Governor Lisogórski, ignorant of this important fact, telegraphed the isprávnik to send the prisoner at once "by étape" to the town of Surgút. The isprávnik summoned the nachálnik of the local convoy command, acquainted him with the governor's orders, and directed him to carry them into effect. The convoy officer, however, declined to do so, upon the ground that he was strictly forbidden to receive from the local authorities prisoners who were sick; that Dr. Dólgopólof was in a dan-

¹ The sanitary condition of the Tiu- treated in the prison hospital. (Rekalinsk prison in 1884 was such that port of the Prison Administration for thirty per cent. of its inmates were 1885.)

gerous condition; that he would very likely die on the road; and that he himself (the convoy officer) might then be held to serious accountability for violation of law in taking charge of him. The isprávnik, determined not to be thwarted in his attempt to get rid of a man whom he hated. obtained a peasant's cart, detailed two or three of his own police officers to act as a convoy, and went with them to the young surgeon's house. Dr. Dólgopólof was lying in bed, and was so weak that he could not stand. His wife resisted forcibly the attempt to remove him, whereupon she was tied hand and foot, and her husband, clothed only in a nightshirt, was carried out in a sheet and put into the cart. transaction occurred on the 24th of October, 1883. weather was cold and raw, and Dr. Dólgopólof would almost certainly have perished from exposure had not a sympathetic bystander taken off and thrown over him his own fur "shuba," or overcoat. In this condition the sick prisoner was carried to the circuit town of Ishim, a distance of · 126 miles. In Ishím there were at that time eleven political exiles, including the well-known Russian novelist Máchtet. Many of them knew Dr. Dólgopólof personally, all of them knew his history, and as soon as they discovered his condition they went to the Ishim isprávnik and declared that they would resist to the uttermost, with force, any attempt to carry the young surgeon on. They had him examined by the local medical officer; they induced the isprávnik to draw up a "protocol," or statement of the circumstances of the case; and they telegraphed Governor Lisogórski at Tobólsk, asking whether he had authorized the isprávnik of Tiukalínsk to send a dying man out on the road, at that season of the year, with no other covering than a night-shirt. As soon as the governor learned that Dr. Dólgopólof was sick he telegraphed the isprávnik at Ishím to have the young surgeon taken to the hospital and properly cared for, and suspended the order for his removal to Surgut. It was currently reported in Ishim that his Excellency also availed himself of this favorable opportunity to "squeeze" five hundred rúbles out of the isprávnik of Tiukalínsk as the price of immunity from prosecution on the charge of violating law by sending an exile out on the road while dangerously sick. The report may or may not have been well founded, but it was a notorious fact that the governor sold to the highest bidder most of the provincial offices at his disposal, and that he received payment in money intentionally lost to him at cards by the officeseekers.1

Dr. Dólgopólof remained in the Ishím hospital until he recovered his health, and was then sent forward to his destination. He was eventually transferred to the province of Semipalátinsk, where his condition was greatly improved, and where, when I last heard of him, he was engaged in making craniological measurements and anthropological researches among the Kírghis.²

I have, perhaps, devoted a disproportionate amount of space to this "affair of the unauthorized extraction of a bullet, by the administrative exile Nifónt Dólgopólof, from the leg of Madame Balákhina, wife of the mayor of Tiukalínsk"; but it is a typical case, and not only illustrates the inherent defects of the Russian method of dealing with "untrustworthy" citizens, but shows clearly the specific nature of the grievances against which the Surgut exiles protested in their letter to the Minister of the Interior in April, 1888. In that case one of the politicals, the late Mr.

at the time of my visit, against whom were pending as many as ten criminal charges. They had contrived, however, by means best known to themselves and their superiors, to stave off trial year after year, and I have no doubt that they are still holding their places.

² A fairly accurate account of the treatment of Dr. Dólgopólof by the isprávnik of Tiukalínsk was published in the Siberian Gazette at Tomsk, and

¹ There were isprávniks in Siberia, the substance of it was reprinted in the London Times of January 11, 1884 (weekly edition), under the head of "Russia." The Russian censor, however, would not allow the Siberian Gazette to say that the victim of this brutality was a political exile, and consequently the London Times was unaware of the fact. The circumstances that led to the final collision between the isprávnik and the young surgeon are now published for the first time.

Leo Ivanof, had been virtually murdered by official cruelty and indifference, and two others had been reduced to such a physical condition that, to use their own word, they regarded themselves as "doomed." As these two sick men have since been "removed" to Berózof, Turukhánsk, or some worse place, they are, perhaps, by this time dead and out of their misery.

When an administrative exile has succeeded in solving the problem of personal maintenance, and when he is relieved from anxiety with regard to the necessaries of life, such as food, shelter, and clothing, he begins to feel the humiliating restraints of police surveillance and "controlled" correspondence. The officers whose duty it is to watch him are often men of degraded character and criminal antecedents. Many of the zasedátels, or chiefs of police in the vólosts, or districts, and a still greater number of písars, or district police secretaries, are common malefactors, sent to Siberia for felony, and taken into the Government service under assumed names at the expiration of their terms of forced colonization. The initials and places of residence of at least a score of these felons in police uniform have been published in the liberal Siberian newspapers. To men of this character are intrusted, in many parts of Siberia, the health, the honor, and the lives of refined and highly educated political exiles of both sexes, and it is not a matter for surprise if the latter are sometimes outrageously insulted and brutally treated. I personally know police officers in Siberia—and I now particularly remember two, one of them the chief of police in Minusinsk—whom I should hesitate to meet anywhere at night unless I had a revolver. Even in a comparatively well-governed city like Tomsk, the history of the police has been a history stained with acts of violence, outrage, and crime, including the arrest and imprisonment of innocent citizens by the hundred, the taking of bribes from notorious criminals, the subornation of perjury, the use of torture, and the beating nearly to death of pregnant

women. According to the Tomsk Provincial Gazette, an official journal, one of the recently appointed governors of that province received, on the occasion of his very first visit of inspection to the city prisons, no less than three hundred complaints of unjust imprisonment. Upon investigation, two hundred of them were shown to be well founded, and the complainants were set at liberty. So boundless is the power of isprávniks and chiefs of police in the smaller Siberian towns and villages, that among the peasants the expression once became proverbial, "In heaven, God; in Okhótsk, Koch." How many Kochs there are among the isprávniks and zasedátels in the remoter parts of Siberia only God, the peasants, and the political exiles know. The nature of the surveillance maintained by such officers as these over the banished politicals varies in different parts of Siberia; but to what extent the supervision may go is shown by an extract from the letter of an administrative exile published in the Juridical Messenger, the organ of the Moscow Bar Association. It is as follows:

The surveillance maintained over us is of the most unceremonious character. The police officers strive to earn distinction by surpassing one another in assiduous watchfulness. They enter our quarters repeatedly every day to see that we are at home, and that no one else is there, and they go through all our rooms. They walk past our houses constantly, looking in at the windows and listening at the doors. They post sentries at night on the corners of the streets where we reside, and they compel our landlords and our neighbors to watch our movements and report upon them to the local authorities.2

A young lady who was in exile at Tunká, a small East-Siberian village on the frontier of Mongolia, told me that it was not an unusual thing to come back to her apartments after a short walk, or a call upon some other exile, and find

^{1 &}quot;Police Law in Siberia," Eastern No. 41, p. 1.

² Review of the "Rules Relating to Review (St. Petersburg, Oct. 13, 1883), Police Surveillance," in magazine Juridical Messenger, Vol. XIV, No. 12, p. 561. Moscow, December, 1882.

a police officer in cap and boots asleep on her bed. Fear of insult or outrage has forced most of the banished women in Siberia to live in the same houses with the exiled men. Madame Dicheskúla lived in one half of the house occupied by Mr. Lobonófski in Semipalátinsk; Madame Breshkófskaya occupied a room adjoining that of Mr. Shamárin in Selengínsk; and I found the same state of affairs existing in a dozen other parts of Siberia. In fact, it is inevitable. Among the political exiles are defenseless girls from sixteen to twenty years of age, and young married women whose husbands are in other parts of Siberia or in penal servitude at the mines. They cannot live entirely alone under a system of surveillance which authorizes a runaway convict, in the uniform of a police officer, to enter their apartments at any hour of the day or night.

Another feature of administrative exile life, which exasperates and embitters the politicals almost as much as surveillance, is the supervision of their correspondence. An exile whose correspondence is "under control" cannot send a letter to his wife without previously submitting it to the isprávnik for supervision and approval. The isprávnik may, in his discretion, forward it to its destination, destroy it, or send it to the Minister of the Interior. Letters for an exile received at the local post-office are turned over to the same official, who opens and reads them, crosses out anything that may seem to him objectionable, and delivers them, after such mutilation, at his leisure. If he wishes to torture or punish an exile who is personally obnoxious to him, or who has been "audaciously impudent," he may withhold such exile's letters altogether, and deprive him for months of all news from the wife and children whom he has been forced to leave uncared for in European Russia. The isprávnik of Tára, in the province of Tobólsk, used to take the letters of exiles to the local official club, read them aloud to his friends, and ask advice with regard to the erasure or "blacking out" of particular passages. More than one political in Tára heard

of his letters for the first time on the street from some person to whom the isprávnik had shown them. The reader can perhaps imagine, without any assistance from me, the feelings of a political exile who knows that the sacred words of love and tenderness written to him with agony and tears by the unhappy wife who is dearer to him than his own soul have been read aloud by the isprávnik between drinks of vódka to a circle of boon companions at the club. Even when an exile, by a fortunate accident, has heard of a letter addressed to him, he may not be able to get it. The isprávnik, after reading it to his friends, may conclude that it contains a hidden cipher, and that delivery of it is inexpedient. I have seen exile letters that had been scorched with heat and treated with chemicals by suspicious officials who believed, or pretended to believe, that there was invisible writing in sympathetic ink between the lines. Such letters are frequently held by the isprávnik or the chief of police for months, and then, scorched or blistered by experimental tests, and with all of the suspiciously vague or ambiguous expressions carefully crossed out, they are finally delivered. Sometimes an exile is summoned to the police station and subjected to a searching examination with regard to the contents or the meaning of a letter that he has never seen and that is still in the possession of the isprávnik. How maddening such treatment of private correspondence must be to a man who has never been accused of crime, who has never been tried, who has never been legally deprived of his rights as a citizen, and who is already aflame with just indignation, the reader can perhaps imagine.

Another source of exasperation to the administrative exile—and it is the last that I now have space to mention—is the anomalous position in which he is placed by virtue of banishment without trial and subjection to the "Rules Relating to Police Surveillance." He is neither a citizen living under the protection of law, nor a criminal deprived of civil rights by law. He is subject to all the obli-

gations of a citizen, and he does not enjoy even the rights of a criminal. He is, in short, completely at the mercy of irresponsible power. The peculiar situation, from a legal point of view, of a man who has been exiled by administrative process is clearly shown in the following petition or memorial, sent by an administrative exile in the year 1881 to the "Governing Senate"—the Russian High Court of Appeals. Of course the petitioner did not expect by means of this document to improve his condition, or to secure any guaranty of rights. On the contrary, he was almost certain to render his situation worse by sending to the Governing Senate so "audaciously impudent" a communication. He had just been asked, however, to take the oath of allegiance to the new Tsar, Alexander III., and it relieved him, I presume, to give expression to his feelings in this half-satirical production. I do not personally know the petitioner, and it is not necessary to state how I became possessed of a copy of his petition. I can, however, youch for the authenticity, not only of the document itself, but of the indorsement made upon it by the Governing Senate.

> Kurgán, Province of Tobólsk, Western Siberia, March 31, 1881.

To the Governing Senate of the Russian Empire: On the 28th day of March, 1881, I [an administrative exile] received a notification from the police authorities of the town of Kurgán to appear at the police station and take the oath of allegiance to the present reigning Emperor of Russia, Alexander Alexándrovich. This requirement seems to me to be inconsistent with the Emperor's manifesto of March 1, 1881. The reason assigned in that manifesto for requiring the oath of allegiance from the peasants of the empire was that such peasants, by virtue of the decree of emancipation, had ceased to be serfs, had become free citizens, and were therefore subject to the laws made for the government of such citizens. I have all proper respect for these words, and I regard as perfectly just, not only the reasoning itself, but the conclusions that logically flow from that reasoning. One of these eonclusions is, that if Russian peasants [and other Russians] had

not been free citizens, and had not been subject to the general laws of the Empire, they would not have been required to take the oath of allegiance. The Imperial manifesto of March 1 exacts the oath of allegiance only from free citizens subject to the operation of all the laws of the State. The question now arises, "What am I; am I a free citizen?" My father was an hereditary noble of the Russian Empire, and my mother was my father's legal wife. According to Russian law I must inherit the rank of my father, and consequently the rights of a free citizen. The most important rights guaranteed by law to a free citizen are, first, the right to personal liberty [so long as he does not commit a crime], and, second, the right to protection for his family and for his property. I myself, however, am deprived of liberty; my family has been broken up; my property has been confiscated by the Third Section, and I am forbidden to engage in the lawful occupations for which I have been specially fitted. I am not allowed to go a step outside the limits of the town of Kurgán; I have been transported to a distance of 3000 kilometers from my family, and I cannot send a letter even to my wife without previously submitting it to strangers for inspection. In view of these facts it is clear that I am neither a nobleman nor a free citizen.

My forcible detention in Siberia, then, raises the question, "Have I not been deprived of all civil rights and sent hither as a forced colonist?" I turn to the laws of the Empire relating to forced colonists deprived of all civil rights, and I find that their situation is precisely analogous to mine with one exception. A forced colonist may hope gradually to reacquire, by successive steps, a part of the rights that have been taken away from him. He may, in time, recover the right to go from place to place within the limits of his province, or even within the limits of Siberia.² I, however, can indulge no such hope. I am interned in the town of

¹The Third Section of the Tsar's chancellery formerly included the Department of Imperial Police. That department, however, has since been put under the direct control of the Minister of the Interior.

²Russian law provides for an amelioration of the condition of *poseléntsi*, or forced colonists, who have, by continuous good conduct, shown a disposition to reform. After the lapse of more or less time they may obtain permission to

move from place to place within certain prescribed limits, and may even attach themselves eventually to rural Siberian communes, and recover some of their lost rights of citizenship. The point made by Mr. Sidorátski is that he cannot be a criminal colonist because he is denied even the privilege, which is granted to the latter, of improving his condition and reacquiring civil rights. He is in an anomalous position not recognized or provided for by law.

Kurgán for an indefinite period. It is clear, therefore, that I am not a forced colonist, and this conclusion is confirmed by the fact that forced colonization is a punishment inflieted only by sentence of a court and for crime. What, then, am I? If I am neither a freeman, representing the highest grade of Russian citizenship, nor a criminal, representing the lowest grade, I am debarred from Russian eitizenship altogether, or, in other words, I am a foreigner. Indeed I must be a foreigner — unquestionably a foreigner! Russian State does not recognize me as a free citizen, nor does it but me on the level of a criminal whose rights as a citizen have been taken away. It has refused - and worse than refused - to protect my liberty, my family, and my property. I must, therefore, be regarded as a foreigner. But am I a free foreigner? No; I am not free. If I were a free foreigner I should have the right to leave Russia; and I trust that I could find a civilized country - perhaps more than one - that would receive and recognize me as an honest and loval citizen. I am, however, deprived of this right; consequently, if a foreigner, I must be a prisoner of war. But to what nation do I belong, where is my fatherland, and in what war was I captured? Has peace been concluded, and if so, why have not I been returned to my countrymen with other prisoners of war? I am unable to answer these questions; but the situation of a prisoner of war is an intolerably hard one, and in that situation I have been for five years.

I most humbly beg the Russian Governing Senate to accept me as a Russian subject; *i. e.*, to declare me a free Russian citizen living under the protection of the laws. Then, having received all the rights of a citizen, I will gladly perform all a citizen's duties. If, however, the Governing Senate is not willing to accept me as a Russian subject, can it not allow me to leave the Russian Empire, in order that I may find for myself a fatherland?

It seems to me that the oath of allegiance not only imposes certain obligations, but recognizes, at the same time, certain rights. The exaction of that oath from me, therefore, is equivalent to a recognition of my free citizenship. Is not this assumption true? I await an answer. If the Governing Senate, the highest judicial tribunal in Russia, makes it clear to me that I am mistaken, or, in other words, shows me that I must perform all the duties of a Russian subject without enjoying any of a Russian subject's rights, then, as a prisoner of war, I must submit.

Vasílli Sidorátski.

(INDORSEMENT ON THE ABOVE PETITION.)

On this the 4th day of June, 1881, the Governing Senate, having heard the within petition, orders: That since such petition does not bear the highest title, and is not in the form prescribed by law (Article 205, part 2, Vol. X of the Collection of Laws, edition of 1876), it shall be returned to the petitioner without consideration (in accordance with Article 225 of the same part and volume). A ukáz to carry this resolution into effect will be sent the provincial administration of Tobólsk.

CHIEF SECRETARY N. BRUD ——[remainder of name illegible in the original.]

By Ass't Chief Secretary Baron Bukshevden.

The result of putting an innocent man into the extralegal position described by Mr. Sidorátski, and treating him as if he had no rights that any official need respect, is to exasperate and infuriate him to the last degree. The wellknown but now suppressed Russian newspaper, Gólos, in a review of the "Rules Relating to Police Surveillance," said, with force and justice, that "administrative exile is a double-edged weapon. It removes from a certain place a man who is thought to exert an injurious influence, but by depriving him of his civil rights and putting him into the position of an outlaw, it frequently rouses in him such antihuman feelings as to transform a possible criminal not only into an actual one, but into a wild beast, capable of anything. Almost all of our noted political criminals—and especially the leaders—have been through this school."

¹ The meaning is that it is not addressed in the name of the Tsar.

CHAPTER III

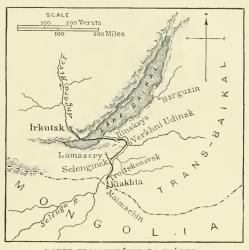
A VISIT TO THE SELENGÍNSK LAMASERY

THE latter part of our stay in the city of Irkútsk was devoted mainly to preparations for the journey that we were about to make through the little-known territory of the Trans-Baikál. We anticipated that this would be a very hard experience. The region that we purposed to explore was wilder and lonelier than any part of Siberia we had seen except the Altái; the convict mines, which we wished to inspect, were scattered over a rough, mountainous country thousands of square miles in extent, lying between the head-waters of the Amur and the frontier of Mongolia: most of these mines were off the regular post roads, and were not laid down on the maps; we anticipated great difficulty in obtaining permission to visit them, and still greater difficulty in actually reaching them; and finally, we were about to plunge into this wilderness of the Trans-Baikál at the beginning of a semi-arctic winter, when storms and bitter cold would be added to the hardships with which we were already familiar. Owing to the fact that the territory of the Trans-Baikál had shortly before been detached from the governor-generalship of Eastern Siberia and annexed to the governor-generalship of the Amúr, we could not get in Irkútsk any assurance that permission to visit the mines would be granted us. In reply to my questions upon the subject Count Ignátief and Acting-Governor Petróf merely said, "The Trans-Baikál is out of our jurisdiction; for permission to visit the

mines you will have to apply to Governor-general Korf or to Governor Barabásh."

As both of the officials last named were at that time in Khabarófka, on the lower Amúr, nearly 1500 miles beyond the mines and 2000 miles from Irkútsk, the prospect of getting their permission did not seem to be very bright.

We determined, however, to go ahead without permission, trusting to be saved, by luck and our own wits, from any serious trouble. Instead of proceeding directly to the mines, we decided to make a detour to the southward from Vérkhni Údinsk, for the purpose of visiting Kiákhta, the Mongolian frontier-



ROUTE FROM IRKÚTSK TO KIÁKHTA.

town of Maimáchin, and the great Buddhist lamasery of Goose Lake. We were tired of prisons and the exile system; we had had misery enough for a while; and it seemed to me that we should be in better condition to bear the strain of the mines if we could turn our thoughts temporarily into other channels and travel a little, as boys say, "for fun." I was anxious, moreover, to see something of that corrupted form of the Buddhistic religion called Lamaism, which prevails so extensively in the Trans-Baikál, and which is there localized and embodied in the peculiar monastic temples known to the Russians as datsáns, or lamaseries. The lamasery of Goose Lake had been described to us in Irkútsk as one of the most interesting and important of these temples, for the reason that it was the residence of the Khambá Lamá, or Grand Lama

of Eastern Siberia. It was distant only thirty versts from the village of Selengínsk, through which we must necessarily pass on our way to Kiákhta; we could visit it without much trouble, and we decided, therefore, to make it our first objective point.

There are two routes by which it is possible to go from Irkútsk into the Trans-Baikál. The first and most direct of them follows the river Angará for about forty miles to its source in Lake Baikál, and then crosses that lake to the village of Boyárskaya. The second and longer route leads to Boyárskaya by a picturesque "cornice road," carried with much engineering skill entirely around the southern end of the lake, high above the water, on the slopes and cliffs of the circumjacent mountains. The "round-the-lake" route, on account of the beauty of its scenery, would probably have been our choice had it been open to us; but recent floods had swept away a number of bridges near the southwestern extremity of the lake, and thus for the time had put a stop to all through travel. There remained nothing for us to do, therefore, but to cross the lake by steamer.

In view of the near approach of winter, we decided to leave our heavy tárantás in Irkútsk for sale, and to travel, until snow should fall, in the ordinary wheel vehicles of the country, transferring our baggage from one conveyance to another at every post-station. This course of procedure is known in Siberia as traveling na perekladníkh, or "on transfers," and a more wretched, exasperating, body-bruising, and heart-breaking system of transportation does not anywhere exist. If we could have anticipated one-tenth part of the misery that we were to endure as a result of traveling "on transfers" in the Trans-Baikál, we should never have made the fatal mistake of leaving our roomy and comparatively comfortable tárantás in Irkútsk.

Thursday afternoon, September 24th, we ordered horses, stowed away our baggage in the small, springless vehicle

that was sent to us from the post-station, seated ourselves insecurely on the uneven surface made by furs, satchels, bread-bags, tea-boxes, felt boots, and the photographic apparatus, bade good-by to Lieutenant Schuetze, Mr. Bukófski, and Zhan, who had assembled in the courtyard to see us off, and finally, with a measured jangling of two or three discordant bells from the wooden arch over the thill-horse's back, rode out of the city and up the right bank of the Angará, on our way to Lake Baikál, the lamasery of Gusínnoí Ózera, Kiákhta, and the convict mines.

The weather was warm and sunshiny; there was a faint, soft autumnal haze in the air; and the foliage of the deciduous trees, although touched with color by the frost, had not yet fallen. Flowers still lingered here and there in sheltered places, and occasionally a yellow butterfly zigzagged lazily across the road ahead of us. The farmer's grain had everywhere been harvested, the last hay had been stacked, and in the courtyards of many of the village houses we noticed quantities of tobacco or hemp plant spread out in the sunshine to dry.

About half way between Irkútsk and the first post-station we met a man driving a team of four horses harnessed to a vehicle that looked like a menagerie-wagon, or a closed wild-beast cage. I asked our driver what it was, and he replied that he presumed it was the Siberian tiger that was to be brought to Irkútsk for exhibition from some place on the Amúr. A living tiger captured in Siberia seemed to us a novelty worthy of attention; and directing our driver to stop and wait for us, we ran back and asked the tiger's keeper if he would not open the cage and let us see the animal. He good-humoredly consented, and as we pressed eagerly up to the side of the wagon he took down the wide, thin boards that masked the iron grating. We heard a hoarse, angry snarl, and then before we had time to step back a huge, tawny beast striped with black threw himself against the frail bars with such tremendous violence and ferocity

that the wagon fairly rocked on its wheels, and we thought for a single breathless instant that he was coming through like a three-hundred-pound missile from a catapult. The grating of half-inch iron, however, was stronger and more firmly secured than it seemed to be; and although it was bent a little by the shock, it did not give way. The keeper seized a long, heavy iron bar and belabored the tiger with it through the grating until he finally lay down in one corner of the cage, snarling sullenly and fiercely like an enraged cat. I could not learn from the keeper the weight nor the dimensions of this tiger, but he seemed to me to be a splendid beast, quite as large as any specimen I had ever seen. He had been captured by some Russian peasants in the valley of the Amúr—one of the very few places on the globe where the tropical tiger meets the arctic reindeer.

The distance from Irkútsk to Lake Baikál is only forty miles; and as the road along the Angará was smooth and in good condition, we made rapid progress. The farther we went to the eastward, the higher and more picturesque became the banks of the river. On the last station they assumed an almost mountainous character, and along one side of the deep gorge formed by them the narrow, sinuous road was carried at a height of fifty or sixty feet above the water in an artificial cutting, bordered for miles at a time by a substantial guard-rail.

As it grew dark a cold, dense fog began to drift down the gorge from the lake; now hiding everything from sight except a short stretch of road hung apparently in misty mid-air, and then opening in great ragged rents, or gaps, through which loomed the dim but exaggerated outlines of the dark, eraggy heights on the opposite shore. The surface of Lake Baikál is more than 400 feet higher than the city of Irkútsk, and the river Angará, through which the lake discharges into the arctic ocean, falls that 400 feet in a distance of 40 miles, making a current that is everywhere extremely swift, and that runs in some places at the

rate of 12 or 15 miles an hour. Steamers ply back and forth between the city and the lake, but they are six or eight hours in struggling up-stream, while they come down in about two. At the outlet, where the current is swiftest, the river never entirely freezes over, and it does not close opposite Irkútsk until some time in January, although the thermometer frequently goes to forty degrees below zero in December. The Angará is in all respects a peculiar and original river. Instead of coming into existence as a brook, it is born a mile wide with a current like a mill-race. Although its water, even in the hottest midsummer weather, is icy cold, it is the very last river in Siberia to freeze. It chills the adventurous bather to the bone in August, and then in the coldest weather of December steams as if it were boiling. Finally, it overflows its banks, not in the spring, when other rivers overflow theirs, but in early winter, when all other streams are locked in ice.

We reached the coast of Lake Baikál, at the village of Lístvinichnaya, about nine o'clock Thursday evening. A raw, chilly wind, laden with moisture, was blowing off the water, and the cell-like room to which we were shown in the small log hotel opposite the steamer-landing was so cold that as soon as possible we went to bed in our caps, boots, and heavy sheepskin overcoats. The words "went to bed" are, of course, to be understood figuratively. As a matter of fact, we simply lay down on the floor. We did not see a civilized bed in the Trans-Baikál, and I slept in all my clothing more than three-fourths of the time from the 1st of October to the 20th of March.

The steamer did not sail Friday until noon, and we therefore had ample time to study and sketch the lake port of Listvinichnaya. It was a small village of perhaps a hundred insignificant log houses, scattered thinly along a single street, which extended for a mile or two up and down the lake between a range of high wooded hills and the water. The only harbor that the place could boast was a small

semi-inclosure made by a low breakwater, within which a side-wheel steamer called the *Platon* was lying quietly at anchor. The blue water of the lake was hardly more than rippled by a gentle north-easterly breeze, and far away beyond it could be seen a long line of snow-covered mountains in the



VILLAGE OF LÍSTVINICHNAYA.

Trans-Baikál. I was a little surprised to find the lake so narrow. Although it has a length of nearly 400 miles, its width at Lístvinichnaya is only 20 miles, and its average width not much more than 30. The opposite coast can therefore be seen from the steamer-landing with great distinctness; and as it is very high and mountainous, it can be traced by the eye for a distance of 60 or 70 miles.

Mr. Frost spent the greater part of Friday morning in making sketches of the village and the lake, while I returned to the hotel, after a short walk along the shore, and devoted myself to letter-writing. About half-past ten Frost came in and reported that the steamer Buriát with the mails from Irkútsk was in sight, that the Platon had made fast to the wharf, and that it was time to go on board. We walked down to the landing, engaged the only first-class stateroom on the steamer, had our baggage transferred to it, and then waited an hour and a half for the mails from the Buriát. They came on board at last; and the Platon, backing slowly

out of the encircling arm of the breakwater, started up the lake.

Our fellow-passengers did not number more than twenty or thirty, and most of them seemed to be traveling third-class on deck. The only persons who interested me were three or four Chinese traders, in their characteristic national dress, who spoke funny "pigeon Russian," and who were on their way to Kiákhta with about a thousand pounds of medicinal deer-horns.

The eastern coast of the lake, as we steamed slowly northward, became lower, less mountainous, and less picturesque, and before dark the high, snow-covered peaks that we had seen from Listvinichnaya vanished in the distance behind us. We arrived off Boyárskaya about six o'clock in the evening, but to our great disappointment were unable to land. A strong breeze was blowing down the lake, it was very dark, and the sea was so high that the captain could not get alongside the unsheltered wharf. He made three unsuccessful attempts, and then ran out into the lake and



LAKE BAIKÁL AND STEAMER-LANDING AT LÍSTVINICHNAYA.

anchored. We spent a very uncomfortable night on narrow benches in our prison cell of a stateroom, while the small steamer rolled and plunged on the heavy sea, and we were more than glad when morning finally dawned and the

Platon ran up to her wharf. But we did not know what the Trans-Baikál had in store for us. In less than forty-eight hours we should have been glad to get back on board that same steamer, and should have regarded our prison-cell stateroom as the lap of luxury.

We went ashore, of course, without breakfast; the weather was damp and chilly, with a piercing north-easterly wind; the wretched village of Boyárskaya contained



AN EAST-SIBERIAN TELÉGA.

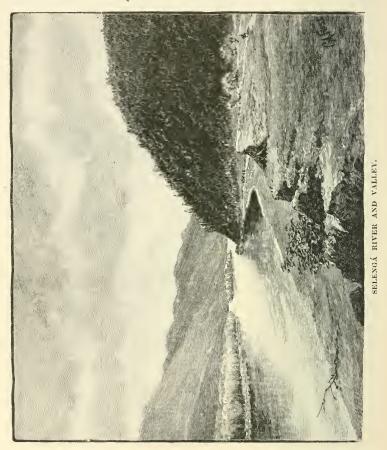
no hotel; the poststation was cold, dirty, and full of travelers lying asleep on benches or on the mud-incrusted plank floor; there were no horses to carry us away from the place;

and the outlook was discouraging generally. We were in a blue chill from hunger and cold before we could even find shelter. We succeeded at last in hiring "free" horses from a young peasant on the wharf; and after drinking tea and eating a little bread in his log cabin, we piled our baggage up in the shallow box of a small, springless teléga, climbed up on top of it, and set out for Selengínsk.

On a bad, rough road an East-Siberian teléga of the type shown in the illustration on this page will simply jolt a man's soul out in less than twenty-four hours. Before we had traveled sixty miles in the Trans-Baikál I was so exhausted that I could hardly sit upright; my head and spine ached so violently, and had become so sensitive to shock, that every jolt was as painful as a blow from a club; I had tried to save my head by supporting my body on my bent arms until my arms no longer had any strength; and when we reached the post-station of Ílinskaya, at half-past ten o'clock Saturday night, I felt worse than at any time since crossing the Uráls. After drinking tea and eating a little

bread, which was all that we could get, we immediately went to bed, Frost lying on the floor near the oven, while I took a wooden bench beside the window. After a long struggle with parasitic vermin, I finally sank into a doze. I was almost immediately awakened by the arrival of an under-officer traveling on a Government padarózhnaya. Candles were lighted; the officer paced back and forth in our room, talking loudly with the station-master about the condition of the roads; and sleep, of course, was out of the question. In half an hour he went on with fresh horses. the lights were again put out, and we composed ourselves for slumber. In twenty minutes the post arrived from Irkútsk. The transferring of twelve teléga-loads of mailbags from one set of vehicles to another, and the changing of about thirty horses, caused a general hubbub which lasted another hour. Every time the door was opened there was a rush of cold air into the overheated room, and we alternated between a state of fever and a state of chill. About half-past one o'clock in the morning the post finally got away, with much shouting and jangling of bells, the lights were put out, and the station again quieted down. We had hardly closed our eyes when the door was thrown wide open, and somebody stalked in shouting lustily in the dark for the station-master. This party of travelers proved to be a man, his wife, and a small baby with the croup. woman improvised a bed for the infant on two chairs, and then she and her husband proceeded to drink tea. hissing of the samovár, the rattling of dishes, the loud conversation, and the croupy coughing of the child kept us awake until about four o'clock, when this party also went on and the lights were once more extinguished. All the bedbugs in the house had by this time ascertained my situation, and in order to escape them I went and lay down on the floor beside Frost. In the brief interval of quiet that followed I almost succeeded in getting to sleep, but at half-past four there was another rush of cold air from the

door, and in came two corpulent merchants from the lower Amúr on their way to Irkútsk. They ordered the *samovár*, drank tea, smoked cigarettes, and discussed methods of gold-mining until half-past five, when, as there were no



horses, they began to consider the question of taking a nap. They had just decided that they would lie down for a while when the jangling of horse-bells in the courtyard announced another arrival, and in came a white-bearded old man with a shot-gun. Where he was going I don't know; but when he ordered the samovár and began an

animated conversation with the two merchants about grist-mills I said to Frost, with a groan, "It's no use. I have n't had a wink of sleep, I've been tormented by bedbugs, I've taken cold from the incessant opening of that confounded door and have a sharp pain through one lung, and I am going to get up and drink tea." It was then broad day-light. The white-bearded old man with the shot-gun invited us to take tea with him, and said he had seen us on the steamer. We talked about the newly discovered Mongolian gold placer known as the "Chinese California," which was then attracting the attention of the Siberian public, and under the stimulating influence of social intercourse and hot tea I began to feel a little less miserable and dejected.

About half-past ten o'clock Sunday morning we finally obtained horses, put our baggage into another rough, shallow teléga, and resumed our journey. The night had been cold, and a white frost lay on the grass just outside the village; but as the sun rose higher and higher the air lost its chill, and at noon we were riding without our overcoats. About ten versts from Ilinskaya the road turned more to the southward and ran up the left bank of the Selengá River, through the picturesque valley shown in the illustration on opposite page. The bold bluff on the right was a solid mass of canary-colored birches, with here and there a dull-red poplar; the higher and more remote mountains on the left, although not softened by foliage, were

. . . bathed in the tenderest purple of distance, And tinted and shadowed by pencils of air;

while in the foreground, between the bluff and the mountains, lay the broad, tranquil river, like a Highland lake, reflecting in its clear depths the clumps of colored trees on its banks and the soft rounded outlines of its wooded islands. The valley of the Selengá between Ílinskaya and Vérkhni Údinsk seemed to me to be warmer and more

fertile than any part of the Trans-Baikál that we had yet seen. The air was filled all the afternoon with a sweet autumnal fragrance like that of ripe pippins; the hillsides were still sprinkled with flowers, among which I noticed asters, forget-me-nots, and the beautiful lemon-yellow alpine poppy; the low meadows adjoining the river were dotted with haystacks and were neatly fenced; and the log houses and barns of the Buriát farmers, scattered here and there throughout the valley, gave to the landscape a familiar and home-like aspect.

If we had felt well, and had a comfortable vehicle, we should have enjoyed this part of our journey very much; but as the result of sleeplessness, insufficient food, and constant jolting, we had little capacity left for the enjoyment of anything. We passed the town of Vérkhni Údinsk at a distance of two or three miles late Sunday afternoon, and reached Múkhinskoe, the next station on the Kiákhta road, about seven o'clock in the evening. Mr. Frost seemed to be comparatively fresh and strong; but I was feeling very badly, with a pain through one lung, a violent headache, great prostration, and a pulse so weak as to be hardly perceptible at the wrist. I did not feel able to endure another jolt nor to ride another yard; and although we had made only thirty-three miles that day we decided to stop for the night. Since landing in the Trans-Baikál we had had nothing to eat except bread, but at Múkhinskoe the station-master's wife gave us a good supper of meat, potatoes, and eggs. This, together with a few hours of troubled sleep which the fleas and bedbugs permitted us to get near morning, so revived our strength that on Monday we rode seventy miles, and just before midnight reached the village of Selengínsk, near which was situated the lamasery of Goose Lake.

On the rough plank floor of the cold and dirty poststation house in Selengínsk we passed another wretched night. I was by this time in such a state of physical exhaustion that in spite of bedbugs and of the noise made by the arrival and departure of travelers I lost consciousness in a sort of stupor for two or three hours. When I awoke,



KHAINÚIEF MUNKÚ AND HIS CHILDREN.

however, at daybreak I found one eye closed and my face generally so disfigured by bedbug-bites that I was ashamed to call upon the authorities or even to show myself in the

street. Cold applications finally reduced the inflammation, and about ten o'clock I set out in search of the Buriát chief of police, Khainúief Munkú, who had been recommended to us as a good Russian and Buriát interpreter, and a man well acquainted with the lamasery that we desired to visit. I found Khainúief at the office of the district isprávnik. where he was apparently getting his orders for the day from the isprávnik's secretary. He proved to be a tall, athletic, heavily built Buriát, about sixty years of age, with a round head, closely cut iron-gray hair, a thick bristly mustache, small, half-closed Mongol eyes, and a strong, swarthy, hard-featured, and rather brutal face. He was dressed in a long, loose Buriát gown of some coarse grayish material, girt about the waist with a sash, and turned back and faced at the wrists with silk. His head was partly covered with a queer Mongol felt hat, shaped like a deep pie-dish, and worn with a sort of devil-may-care tilt to one side. The portrait of him on page 73 is from a photograph, and would give a very good idea of the man if the face were a little harder, sterner, and more brutal.

I introduced myself to the *isprávnik's* secretary, exhibited my open letters, and stated my business. "This is Khainúief Munkú," said the secretary, indicating the Buriát officer; "he can go to the lamasery with you if he likes."

As I looked more closely at the hard-featured, bulletheaded chief of police, it became apparent to me that he had been drinking; but he had, nevertheless, the full possession of his naturally bright faculties, and the severe judicial gravity of his demeanor as he coolly defrauded me out of six or eight $r\'{a}bles$ in making the necessary arrangements for horses excited my sincere admiration. For his services as interpreter and for the use of three horses I paid him seventeen $r\'{a}bles$, which was more than the amount of his monthly salary. The money, however, was well invested, since he furnished us that day with much more than seventeen $r\'{a}bles$, worth of entertainment.

About an hour after my return to the post-station, Khainúief, in a peculiar clumsy gig called a sidéika, drove into the courtyard. He was transfigured and glorified almost beyond recognition. He had on a long, loose, ultramarine-blue silk gown with circular watered figures in it, girt about the waist with a scarlet sash and a light-blue silken scarf, and falling thence to his heels over coarse cow-hide boots. A dishpan-shaped hat of bright red felt was secured to his large round head by means of a colored string tied under his chin, and from this red hat dangled two long narrow streamers of skyblue silk ribbon. He had taken six or eight more drinks, and was evidently in the best of spirits. The judicial gravity of his demeanor had given place to a grotesque middle-age friskiness, and he looked like an intoxicated Tatár prize-fighter masquerading in the gala dress of some color-loving peasant girl. I had never seen such an extraordinary chief of police in my life, and could not help wondering what sort of a reception would be given by his Serene Highness the Grand Lama to such an interpreter.

In a few moments the ragged young Buriát whom Khainúief had engaged to take us to the lamasery made his appearance with three shaggy Buriát horses and a rickety old pavóska not half big enough to hold us. I asked Khainúief if we should carry provisions with us, and he replied that we need not; that we should be fed at the lamasery. "But," he added, with a grin and a leer of assumed cunning, "if you have any insanity drops don't fail to take them along; insanity drops are always useful."

When we had put into the pavóska our blankets, sheep-skin overcoats, the bread-bag, and my largest liquor-flask, Frost and I took seats at the rear end of the vehicle with our legs stretched out on the bottom, and Khainúief, who weighed at least two hundred pounds, sat on our feet. Not one of us was comfortable; but Frost and I had ceased to expect comfort in an East-Siberian vehicle, while Khainúief

had been so cheered and inebriated by the events of the morning, and was in such an exalté mental condition, that mere physical discomfort had no influence upon him whatever. He talked incessantly; but noticing after a time that we were disposed to listen rather than to reply, and imagining that our silence must be due to the overawing effect of his power and glory, he said to me with friendly and reassuring condescension, "You need n't remember that I am the chief of police; you can treat me and talk to me just as if I were a private individual."

I thanked him for his generous attempt to put us at our ease in his august presence, and he rattled on with all sorts of nonsense to show us how gracefully he could drop the mantle of a dread and mighty chief of police and condescend to men of low degree.

About five versts from the town we stopped for a moment to change positions, and Khainúief suggested that this would be a good time to try the "insanity drops." I gave him my flask, and after he had poured a little of the raw vódka into the palm of his hand and thrown it to the four cardinal points of the compass as a libation to his gods, he drank two cupfuls, wiped his wet, bristly mustache on the tail of his ultramarine blue silk gown, and remarked with cool impudence, "Prostáya kabáchnaya!" [Common gin-mill stuff!] I could not remember the Russian equivalent for the English proverb about looking a gift-horse in the mouth, but I suggested to Khainúief that it was not necessary to poison himself with a second cupful after he had discovered that it was nothing but "common gin-mill stuff." noticed that poor as the stuff might be he did not waste any more of it on his north-south-east-and-west gods. raw, fiery spirit had less effect upon him than I anticipated, but it noticeably increased the range of his self-assertion and self-manifestation. He nearly frightened the life out of our wretched driver by the fierceness with which he shouted "Yábo! Yábo!" [Faster! faster!], and when the poor driver

could not make his horses go any faster, Khainúief sprang upon him, apparently in a towering rage, seized him by the throat, shook him, choked him, and then, leaving him half dead from fright, turned to us with a bland, self-satisfied smile on his hard, weather-beaten old face, as if to say, "That's the way I do it! You see what terror I inspire!" He looked very hard at every Buriát we passed, as if he suspected him of being a thief, shouted in a commanding, tyrannical voice at most of them, greeted the Chinese with a loud "How!" to show his familiarity with foreign languages and customs, and finally, meeting a picturesquely dressed and rather pretty Buriát woman riding into town astride on horseback, he made her dismount and tie her horse to a tree in order that he might kiss her. The woman seemed to be half embarrassed and half amused by this remarkable performance; but Khainúief, removing his red dish-pan hat with its long blue streamers, kissed her with "ornamental earnestness" and with a grotesque imitation of stately courtesy, and then, allowing her to climb back into her saddle without the least assistance, he turned to us with a comical air of triumph and smiling self-conceit which seemed to say, "There, what do you think of that? That's the kind of man I am! You can't make a pretty woman get off her horse just to kiss you." He seemed to think that we were regarding all his actions and achievements with envious admiration, and as he became more and more elated with a consciousness of appearing to advantage, his calls for "insanity drops" became more and more frequent. I began to fear at last that before we should reach the lamasery he would render himself absolutely incapable of any service requiring judgment and tact, and that as soon as the Grand Lama should discover his condition he would order him to be ducked in the lake. But I little knew the Selengínsk chief of police.

The road that we followed from Selengínsk to the lamasery ran in a northwesterly direction up a barren, stony

valley between two ranges of low brownish hills, and the scenery along it seemed to me to be monotonous and uninteresting. I did not notice anything worthy of attention until we reached the crest of a high divide about twenty versts from Selenginsk and looked down into the valley of Goose Lake. There, between us and a range of dark blue mountains in the northwest, lay a narrow sheet of tranquil water, bounded on the left by a grassy steppe, and extending to the right as far as a projecting shoulder of the ridge would allow us to trace it. The shores of this lake were low and bare, the grass of the valley had turned yellow from frost or drought, there were no trees to be seen except on the higher slopes of the distant mountains, and the whole region had an appearance of sterility and desolation that suggested one of the steppes of the upper Írtish. On the other side of the lake, and near its western extremity, we could just make out from our distant point of view a large white building surrounded by a good-sized Buriát village of scattered log houses. It was the lamasery of Gusínnoi Ózera.

At sight of the sacred building, Khainúief, who was partly intoxicated at ten o'clock in the morning, and who had been taking "insanity drops" at short intervals ever since, became perceptibly more sober and serious; and when, half an hour later, we forded a deep stream near the western end of the lake, he alighted from the pavóska and asked us to wait while he took a cold bath. In about five minutes he reappeared perfectly sober, and resuming the severe judicial gravity of demeanor that characterized him as a Russian official, he proceeded to warn us that it would be necessary to treat the Grand Lama with profound respect. He seemed to be afraid that we, as Christians and foreigners, would look upon Khambá Lamá as a mere idolatrous barbarian, and would fail to treat him with proper deference and courtesy. I told him that we were accustomed to meet ecclesiastical authorities of the highest rank,

and that we knew perfectly well how to behave towards them. Feeling reassured on this point, Khainúief proceeded to consider the probable attitude of the Grand Lama towards us, and the statements that should be made to that high dignitary concerning us.

"How are you magnified?" he asked me suddenly, after a short reflective pause. He might as well have asked me, "How are you electrified?" or "How are you galvanized?" so far as the conveyance of any definite idea to my mind was concerned. I made no reply.

"What are you called in addition to your name?" he repeated, varying the form of his question. "What is your chin [rank]?"

"We have no *chin* in our country," said Mr. Frost; "we are simply private American citizens."

"Then you are not nobles?"

"No."

"You have no titles?"

"Not a title."

"You are not in the service of your Government?"

"No."

"Then for what purpose are you traveling in Siberia?"

"Merely for our own amusement."

"Then you must be rich?"

"No; we are not rich."

Khainúief was disappointed. He could not get any glory out of introducing to the Grand Lama two insignificant foreigners who had neither rank, title, nor position, who were confessedly poor, and who were not even traveling in the service of their Government.

"Well," he said, after a few moments' consideration, "when the Grand Lama asks you who you are and what your business is in Siberia, you may say to him whatever you like; but I shall translate that you are high *chinóvniks*—deputies, if not ambassadors—sent out by the Government of the great American—what did you say it was,

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republic?—of the great American republic, to make a survey of Siberia and report upon it; and that it is not impossible that your Government may conclude to buy the country from our Góssudár."

"All right," I said laughing, "I don't care how you translate what I say to the Grand Lama; only don't expect me to help you out if you get into trouble."

Khainúief's face assumed again for a moment the expression of drunken cunning, self-conceit, and "friskiness" that it had worn earlier in the day, and it was evident that the mischievous-schoolboy half of the man looked forward with delight to the prospect of being able to play off two insignificant foreign travelers upon the Grand Lama for "high chinóvniks" and "deputies, if not ambassadors, of the great American republic."

As we drove into the little village of brown log houses that surrounded the lamasery, Khainúief became preternaturally grave, removed his blue-streamered red hat, and assumed an air of subdued, almost apprehensive, reverence. One might have supposed this behavior to be an expression of his profound respect for the sacred character of the place; but in reality it was nothing more than a necessary prelude to the little comedy that he purposed to play. He desired to show even the monks whom we passed in the street that he, the great Selengínsk chief of police, did not presume to smile, to speak, or to wear his hat in the majestic presence of the two Lord High Commissioners from the great American republic.

We drove directly to the house of the Grand Lama, in front of which we were met and received by four or five shaven-headed Buddhist acolytes in long brown gowns girt about the waist with dark sashes. Khainúief, still bareheaded, sprung out of the *paróska*, assisted me to alight with the most exaggerated manifestations of respect, and supported me up the steps as carefully and reverently as if an accidental stumble on my part would be little short of

a great national calamity. Every motion that he made seemed to say to the Buriát monks and acolytes, "This man with the bedbug-bitten face, rumpled shirt, and short-tailed jacket does n't look very imposing, but he 's a high chinóvnik in disguise. You see how I have to behave towards him? It would be as much as my life is worth to put on my hat until he deigns to order it."

The house of the Grand Lama was a plain but rather large one-story log building, the main part of which was divided in halves by a central hall. We were shown into an icy-cold reception-room, furnished with an India-shawl pattern carpet of Siberian manufacture, a low couch covered with blue rep-silk, and a few heavy Russian tables and chairs. On the walls hung roller pictures of various holy temples in Mongolia and Thibet, life-size portraits by native artists of eminent Buddhist lamas and saints, coarse colored lithographs of Alexander II. and Alexander III., and a small card photograph of the Emperor William of Germany.

Khainúief presently came in and seated himself quietly on a chair near the door like a recently corrected schoolboy. There was not a trace nor a suggestion in his demeanor of the half-intoxicated, frisky, self-conceited Tatár prize-fighter who had made the Buriát woman get off her horse to kiss him. His eyes looked heavy and dull and showed the effects of the "insanity drops," but his manner and his self-control were perfect. He did not venture to address a word to us unless he was spoken to, and even then his voice was low and deferential. Once in a while, when none of the brown-gowned acolytes were in the room, his assumed mask of reverential seriousness would suddenly break up into a grin of cunning and drollery, and making a significant gesture with his hand to his mouth he would wink at me, as if to say," I'm only pretending to be stupid. I wish I had some insanity drops."

All the acolytes and servants in the place spoke, when they spoke at all, in low whispers, as if there were a dead S2 SIBERIA

body in the house, or as if the Grand Lama were asleep and it would be a terrible thing if he should be accidentally awakened. The room into which we were at first shown was so damp and cellar-like that we were soon in a shiver. Noticing that we were cold, Khainúief respectfully suggested that we go into the room on the other side of the hall, which had a southern exposure and had been warmed a little by the sun. This was a plainer, barer apartment, with unpainted woodwork and furniture; but it was much more cheerful and comfortable than the regular reception-room.

We waited for the Grand Lama at least half an hour. At the expiration of that time Khainúief, who had been making a reconnaissance, came rushing back, saying, "Idyót!" [He 's coming!] In a moment the door opened, and as we rose hastily to our feet the Grand Lama entered. He wore a striking and gorgeous costume, consisting of a superb long gown of orange silk shot with gold thread, bordered with purple velvet, and turned back and faced at the wrists with ultramarine-blue satin so as to make wide cuffs. Over this beautiful yellow gown was thrown a splendid red silk scarf a yard wide and five yards long, hanging in soft folds from the left shoulder and gathered up about the waist. On his head he wore a high, pointed, brimless hat of orange felt, the extended sides of which fell down over his shoulders like the ends of a Russian bashlík, and were lined with heavy gold-thread embroidery. From a cord about his waist hung a large, flat, violet-velvet bag, which had a curiously wrought bronze stopper and which looked like a cloth bottle. Every part of the costume was made of the finest material, and the general effect of the yellow gown and hat, the dark-blue facings, the red scarf, and the violet bag was extremely brilliant and striking. The wearer of this rich ecclesiastical dress was a Buriát about sixty years of age, of middle height and erect figure, with a beardless, somewhat wrinkled, but strong and kindly face. He represented the northern Mongol rather than the Chinese type, and



THE GRAND LAMA.

seemed to be a man of some education and knowledge of the world. He greeted us easily and without embarrassment, and when we had all taken seats he listened with an impassive countenance to the ingenious but highly colored story into which Khainúief translated my modest account of ourselves, our plans, and our object in coming to the lamasery. Whether he believed it all or not I have no means of knowing; but from the subsequent course of events, and from statements made to me in Selengínsk after our return from Kiákhta, I am inclined to believe that Khainúief's diplomacy — not to give it a harsher name — was crowned The bright-witted interpreter certainly with success. played his part to perfection, and he even had the cool assurance to make me say to the Grand Lama that Governor Petróf in Irkútsk had particularly recommended him (Khainúief) to me as a valuable and trustworthy man, and that it was at the request of the governor that he came with us to the lamasery. The modest, deprecatory way in which he twisted into this form my innocent statement that Governor Petróf had sent a telegram about us to the authorities in the Trans-Baikál should have entitled the wily chief of police of Selengínsk to a high place among the great histrionic artists.

After we had drunk tea, which was served from a samo-vár in Russian style, I asked Khambá Lamá whether we should be permitted to inspect the temple. He replied that as soon as he had heard—through Khainúief of course—that such distinguished guests had come to call upon him he had given orders for a short thanksgiving service in the temple in order that we might see it. He regretted that he could not participate in this service himself, on account of recent illness; but Khainúief would go with us and see that we were provided with seats. We then saluted each other with profound bows, the Grand Lama withdrew to his own apartment, and Khainúief, Mr. Frost, and I set out for the temple.

An East-Siberian lamasery is always, strictly speaking, a monastic establishment. It is situated in some lonely place, as far away as possible from any village or settlement, and consists generally of a temple, or place of worship, and from 50 to 150 log houses for the accommodation of the lamas, students, and acolytes, and for the temporary shelter of pilgrims, who come to the lamasery in great



THE LAMASERY.

numbers on certain festival occasions. At the time of our visit three-fourths of the houses in the Goose Lake lamasery seemed to be empty. The datsán, or temple proper, stood in the middle of a large grassy inclosure formed by a high board fence. In plan it was nearly square, while in front elevation it resembled somewhat a three-story pyramid. It seemed to be made of brick covered with white stucco, and there was a great deal of minute ornamentation in red and black along the cornices and over the portico. A good idea of its general outline may be obtained from the small sketch on this page, which was made from a photograph.

Upon entering this building from the portico on the first floor we found ourselves in a spacious but rather dimly lighted hall, the dimensions of which I estimated at 80 feet by 65. Large round columns draped with scarlet cloth supported the ceiling; the walls were almost entirely hidden by pictures of holy places, portraits of saints, and

bright festooned draperies; while colored banners, streamers, and beautiful oriental lanterns hung everywhere in great profusion. The temple was so crowded with peculiar details that one could not reduce his observations to anything like order, nor remember half of the things that the eye noted; but the general effect of the whole was very striking, even to a person familiar with the interiors of Greek and Roman Catholic cathedrals. The impression made upon my mind by the decorations was that of great richness and beauty, both in color and in form. Across the end of the temple opposite the door ran a richly carved lattice-work screen, or partition, in front of which, equidistant one from another, were three large chairs or thrones. These thrones were covered with old-gold silk, were piled high with yellow cushions, and were intended for the Grand Lama, the Sheretúi, or chief lama of the datsán, and his The throne of the Grand Lama was vacant, but the other two were occupied when we entered the temple. In front of these thrones, in two parallel lines, face to face, sat seventeen lamas with crossed legs on long, high divans covered with cushions and yellow felt. Opposite each one, in the aisle formed by the divans, stood a small red table on which lay two or three musical instruments. The lamas were all dressed alike in orange silk gowns, red silk scarfs, and yellow helmet-shaped hats faced with red. On each side of the door as we entered was an enormous drum almost as large as a hogshead—and the two lamas nearest us were provided with iron trumpets at least eight feet long and ten inches in diameter at the larger end. Both drums and trumpets were supported on wooden frames. Chairs were placed for us in the central aisle between the two lines of lamas, and we took our seats.

The scene at the beginning of the service was far more strange and impressive than I had expected it to be. The partial gloom of the temple, the high yellow thrones of the presiding dignitaries, the richness and profusion of the decorations, the colossal drums, the gigantic trumpets, the somber crowd of students and acolytes in black gowns at one end of the room, and the two brilliant lines of orange and crimson lamas at the other made up a picture the strange barbaric splendor of which surpassed anything of



LAMAS AND THEIR MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS.

the kind that I have ever witnessed. For a moment after we took our seats there was a perfect stillness. Then the Sheretúi shook a little globular rattle, and in response to the signal there burst forth a tremendous musical uproar, made by the clashing of cymbals, the deep-toned boom of the immense drums, the jangling of bells, the moaning of conch-shells, the tooting of horns, the liquid tinkle of tri-

SS SIBERIA

angles, and the hoarse bellowing of the great iron trumpets. It was not melody, it was not music; it was simply a tremendous instrumental uproar. It continued for about a minute, and then, as it suddenly ceased, the seventeen lamas began a peculiar, wild, rapid chant, in a deep, low monotone. The voices were exactly in accord, the time was perfect, and the end of every line or stanza was marked by the clashing of cymbals and the booming of the colossal drums. This chanting continued for three or four minutes. and then it was interrupted by another orchestral charivari which would have leveled the walls of Jericho without any supernatural intervention. I had never heard such an infernal tumult of sound. Chanting, interrupted at intervals by the helter-skelter playing of twenty or thirty different instruments, made up the "thanksgiving" temple service, which lasted about fifteen minutes. It was interesting, but it was quite long enough.

Mr. Frost and I then walked around the temple, accompanied by the Sheretúi and Khainúief. Behind the lattice-work screen there were three colossal idols in the conventional sitting posture of the Buddhists, and in front of each of them were lighted tapers of butter, porcelain bowls of rice, wheat, and millet, artificial paper flowers, fragrant burning pastils, and bronze bowls of consecrated water. Against the walls, all around this part of the temple, were bookcases with glass doors in which were thousands of the small figures known to the Christian world as "idols" and called by the Buriáts burkháns. I could not ascertain the reason for keeping so great a number of these figures in the lamasery, nor could I ascertain what purpose they served. They presented an almost infinite variety of types and faces; many of them were obviously symbolical, and all seemed to be representative in some way either of canonized mortals or of supernatural spirits, powers, or agencies. According to the information furnished me by Khainúief, these burkháns, or idols, occupy in the lamaistic system of religious belief the same place that images or pictures of saints fill in the Russian system. From the appearance, however, of many of the idols in the lamasery collection, I concluded that a burkhán might represent an evil as well as a beneficent spiritual power. The word burkhán has long been used all over Mongolia in the general sense of a sacred or supernatural being.1 Dr. Erman believes that "the Mongolian burkhán is identical with the Indian Buddha."2 The burkháns in the lamasery of Goose Lake were crowded together on the shelves of the cases as closely as possible, and apparently no attempt had been made to arrange them in any kind of order. They varied in height from two inches to a foot, and were made generally of brass, bronze, or stone. In one corner of the kumírnia, or idolroom, stood a prayer-wheel, consisting of a large cylinder mounted on a vertical axis and supposed to be filled with written prayers or devotional formulas. I did not see it used, but in the Ónonski lamasery, which we visited a few weeks later, we found an enormous prayer-wheel which had a building to itself and which was in constant use.

From the idol-room we went into the upper stories of the temple, where there were more burkháns as well as a large collection of curious Mongolian and Thibetan books. If we had not been told that the objects last named were books, we never should have recognized them. They were rectangular sheets of thin Chinese paper twelve or fourteen inches in length by about four in width, pressed together between two thin strips of wood or pasteboard, and bound round with flat silken cords or strips of bright-colored cloth. They looked a little like large, well-filled bill-files tied with ribbons or crimson braid. The leaves were printed only on one side, and the characters were arranged in vertical columns. In a few of the volumes that I examined an at-

¹ See "Journey through Tartary, Thibet, and China," by M. Hue, Vol. I, pp. 120, 121. New York: D. Appleton Longman, Brown, Green, & Longmans, & Co., 1852.

^{2 &}quot;Travels in Siberia," by Adolph Erman, Vol. II, p. 309. London: 1848.

tempt apparently had been made to illuminate, with red and yellow ink or paint, the initial characters and the beginnings of chapters, but the work had been coarsely and clumsily done.

From the principal temple of the lamasery we were taken to a chapel or smaller building in the same inclosure to see the great image of Máidera, one of the most highly venerated burkháns in the lamaistic pantheon. It proved to be a colossal human figure in a sitting posture, skilfully carved out of wood and richly overlaid with colors and gold. I estimated its height at thirty-five feet. It stood in the center of a rather narrow but high-domed chapel, hung round with banners, streamers, and lanterns, and really was a very imposing object. Tapers and incense were burning upon an altar covered with silken drapery which stood directly in front of the great idol, and upon the same altar were offerings in the shape of flowers made out of hardened butter or wax, and a large number of bronze or porcelain bowls filled with millet, rice, wheat, oil, honey, or consecrated water. Some of these bowls were open so that their contents could be seen, while others were covered with napkins of red, blue, or yellow silk. Here, as in the great temple, the partial gloom was lighted up by the brilliant coloring of the decorations and draperies, and by the splendid orange and crimson dresses of the attendant lamas.

From the chapel of Máidera we were conducted to a third building in another part of the same inclosure, where we found ourselves in the presence of the sacred white elephant. I had always associated the white elephant with Siam, and was not a little surprised to find a very good imitation of that animal in an East-Siberian lamasery. The elephant of Goose Lake had been skilfully carved by some Buriát or Mongol lama out of hard wood, and had then been painted white, equipped with suitable trappings, and mounted on four low wheels. The sculptured elephant was somewhat smaller than the living animal, and his tusks had

been set at an angle that would have surprised a naturalist; but in view of the fact that the native artist probably never had seen an elephant, the resemblance of the copy to the



original was fairly close. The white elephant is harnessed, as shown in the above illustration, to a large four-wheel wagon, on which stands a beautiful and delicately carved shrine, made in imitation of a two-story temple. On the occasion of the great annual festival of the lamaists

in July a small image of one of the high gods is put into this shrine, and then the elephant and the wagon are drawn in triumphal procession around the lamasery to the music of drums, trumpets, conch-shells, cymbals, and gongs, and with an escort of perhaps three hundred brilliantly costumed lamas.

While we were examining the white elephant, Khainúief came to me and said that Khambá Lamá, in view of the fact that we were the first foreigners who had ever visited the lamasery, had ordered an exhibition to be given for us of the sacred "dance of the burkháns." I strongly suspected that we were indebted for all these favors to Khainúief's unrivaled skill as a translator of truth into fiction; but if we had been introduced to the Grand Lama as "deputies, if not ambassadors, from the great American republic," it was in no sense our fault, and there was no reason why we should not accept the courtesies offered us.

When we returned to the great temple we found that everything was in readiness for the dance. It was to take place out of doors on the grass in front of the datsán, where seats had already been prepared for the musicians and for the Sheretúi and his assistant. The big drums and the eight-foot iron trumpets were brought out, the presiding lamas seated themselves cross-legged on piles of flat yellow cushions in their chairs, and we took the positions assigned to us. At the sounding of a small rattle twelve or fifteen of the strangest, wildest-looking figures I had ever seen rushed out into the open space in front of the temple, and to the crashing, booming accompaniment of cymbals and big iron trumpets began a slow, rhythmical, leaping dance. Four or five of the dancers had on enormous black helmet masks representing grinning Mongolian demons, and from their heads radiated slender rods to which were affixed small colored flags. Two figures had human skulls or death's-heads on their shoulders, one man's body had the head and antlers of a marál, or Siberian stag, and another was surmounted by the head and horns of a bull. Three



THE DANCE OF THE BURKHANS.

or four dancers, who represented good spirits and defenders of the faith, and who were without masks, wore on their heads broad-brimmed hats with a heart-shaped superstructure of gold open-work, and were armed with naked daggers. It seemed to be their province to drive the blackmasked demons and the skull-headed figures out of the field. The dresses worn by all the dancers were of extraordinary richness and beauty, and were so complicated and full of detail that two or three pages would be needed for a complete and accurate description of a single one of them. The materials of the costumes were crimson, scarlet, blue, and orange silk, old-gold brocade, violet velvet, satin of various colors, bright-colored cords, tassels, and fringes, wheel-shaped silver brooches supporting festooned strings of white beads, and gold and silver ornaments in infinite variety, which shone and flashed in the sunlight as the figures pirouetted and leaped hither and thither, keeping time to the measured clashing of cymbals and booming of the great drums. The performance lasted about fifteen minutes, and the last figures to retire were the burkháns with the golden lattice-work hats and the naked daggers. seemed to me evident that this sacred "dance of the burkháns" was a species of religious pantomime or mystery play; but I could not get through Khainúief any intelligible explanation of its significance.

When we returned to the house of the Grand Lama we found ready a very good and well-cooked dinner, with fruit cordial and madeira to cheer the "ambassadors," and plenty of vódka to inebriate Khainúief. After dinner I had a long talk with the Grand Lama about my native country, geography, and the shape of the earth. It seemed very strange to find anywhere on the globe, in the nineteenth century, an educated man and high ecclesiastical dignitary who had never even heard of America, and who did not feel at all sure that the world is round. The Grand Lama was such a man.

"You have been in many countries," he said to me through the interpreter, "and have talked with the wise men of the West; what is your opinion with regard to the shape of the earth?"

"I think," I replied, "that it is shaped like a great ball."

"I have heard so before," said the Grand Lama, looking thoughtfully away into vacancy. "The Russian officers whom I have met have told me that the world is round. Such a belief is contrary to the teachings of our old Thibetan books, but I have observed that the Russian wise men predict eclipses accurately; and if they can tell beforehand when the sun and the moon are to be darkened, they probably know something about the shape of the earth. Why do you think that the earth is round?"

"I have many reasons for thinking so," I answered; but perhaps the best and strongest reason is that I have been around it."

This statement seemed to give the Grand Lama a sort of mental shock.

"How have you been around it?" he inquired. "What do you mean by 'around it?" How do you know that you have been around it?"

"I turned my back upon my home," I replied, "and traveled many months in the course taken by the sun. I crossed wide continents and great oceans. Every night the sun set before my face and every morning it rose behind my back. The earth always seemed flat, but I could not find anywhere an end nor an edge; and at last, when I had traveled more than thirty thousand versts, I found myself again in my own country and returned to my home from a direction exactly opposite to that which I had taken in leaving it. If the world was flat, do you think I could have done this?"

"It is very strange," said the Grand Lama, after a thoughtful pause of a moment. "Where is your country? How far is it beyond St. Petersburg?"

"My country is farther from St. Petersburg than St. Petersburg is from here," I replied. "It lies nearly under our feet; and if we could go directly through the earth, that would be the shortest way to reach it."

"Are your countrymen walking around there heads downward under our feet?" asked the Grand Lama with evident interest and surprise, but without any perceptible change in his habitually impassive face.

"Yes," I replied; "and to them we seem to be sitting heads downward here."

The Grand Lama then asked me to describe minutely the route that we had followed in coming from America to Siberia, and to name the countries through which we had passed. He knew that Germany adjoined Russia on the west, he had heard of British India and of England,—probably through Thibet,—and he had a vague idea of the extent and situation of the Pacific Ocean; but of the Atlantic and of the continent that lies between the two great oceans he knew nothing.

After a long talk, in the course of which we discussed the sphericity of the earth from every possible point of view, the Grand Lama seemed to be partly or wholly convinced of the truth of that doctrine, and said, with a sigh, "It is not in accordance with the teachings of our books; but the Russians must be right."

It is a somewhat remarkable fact that Dr. Erman, one of the few foreigners who had seen the lamasery of Goose Lake previous to our visit, had an almost precisely similar conversation concerning the shape of the earth with the man who was then (in 1828) Grand Lama. Almost sixty years elapsed between Dr. Erman's visit and ours, but the doctrine of the sphericity of the earth continued throughout that period to trouble ecclesiastical minds in this remote East-Siberian lamasery; and it is not improbable that sixty years hence some traveler from the western world may be asked by some future Grand Lama to give his reasons for believing the world to be a sphere.

About five o'clock in the afternoon, after exchanging photographs with the Grand Lama, thanking him for his courtesy and hospitality, and bidding him a regretful good-by, we were lifted carefully into our old *pavóska* by the anxious, respectful, and bare-headed Khainúief in the presence of a crowd of black-robed acolytes and students, and began our journey back to Selengínsk.

CHAPTER IV

A RIDE THROUGH THE TRANS-BAIKÁL

A BOUT nine o'clock Tuesday evening we returned from the lamasery, and at eleven o'clock on the same night we ordered post-horses at Selengínsk and set out for the Russo-Mongolian frontier town of Kiákhta, distant about sixty miles. We ought to have arrived there early on the following morning; but in Siberia, and particularly in the Trans-Baikál, the traveler is always detained more or less by petty unforeseen accidents and misadventures. We were stopped at midnight about six versts from Selengínsk by an unbridged river. Communication between the two shores was supposed to be maintained by means of a karbás, or rude ferryboat; but as this boat happened to be on the other side of the stream, it was of no use to us unless we could awaken the ferryman by calling to him. Singly and in chorus we shouted "Kar-ba-a-a-s!" at short intervals for an hour, without getting any response except a faint mocking echo from the opposite cliffs. Cold, sleepy, and discouraged, we were about to give it up for the night and return to Selengínsk, when we saw the dark outlines of a low, raft-like boat moving slowly up-stream in the shadow of the cliffs on the other side. It was the long-looked-for karbás. In half an hour we were again under way on the southern side of the river, and at three o'clock in the morning we reached the post-station of Povorótnaya. Here, of course, there were no horses. The station-house was already full of travelers asleep on the floor, and there was nothing for us to do except to lie down in an unoccupied corner near the oven, between two Chinese and a pile of medicinal deer-horns, and to get through the remainder of the night as best we could.

All day Wednesday we rode southward through a rather dreary and desolate region of sandy pine barrens or wide

stretches of short dead grass, broken here and there by low hills covered with birches, larches, and evergreens. Now and then we met a train of small one-horse wagons loaded with tea that had come overland across Mongolia from Pekin, or two or three mounted Buriáts in dishpan-shaped hats and long brown kaftáns, upon the breasts of which had been sewn zigzags of red cloth that suggested a rude Mongolian imitation of the Puritan "scarlet letter." As a rule,



A WEALTHY BURIÁT AND WIFE.

however, the road seemed to be little traveled and scantily settled, and in a ride of nearly fifty miles we saw nothing of interest except here and there on the summits of hills small sacred piles of stones which Mr. Frost called "Buriát shrines." All over Siberia it is the custom of the natives when they cross the top of a high hill or mountain to make a propitiatory offering to the spirits of storm and tempest. In the extreme northeastern part of Siberia these offerings consist generally of tobacco, and are thrown out on the ground in front of some prominent and noticeable rock; but in the Trans-Baikál the Buriáts and Mongols are accustomed to pile a heap of stones beside the road, erect thereon half a dozen rods or poles, and suspend from the

latter small pieces of their clothing. Every pious traveler who passes a shrine of this sort on the summit of a mountain is expected to alight from his vehicle or dismount from his horse, tear off a little piece of his *kaftán* or his shirt, hang it up on one of these poles, and say a prayer. As a



PROPITIATORY OFFERINGS OF THE BURIATS.

result of this ceremonial, every shrine presents to the traveler a sort of tailor's collection of scraps and remnants of cloth of every conceivable kind, quality, and color, fluttering to the wind from slender poles that look like hastily improvised fishing-rods. Theoretically this

custom would seem to be not wholly without its advantages. If a native was familiar with the clothing of his friends he could always tell by a simple inspection of one of these shrines who had lately passed that way, and, if necessary, he could trace any particular person from hilltop to hilltop by the strips of his shirt or the frayed edges of his trousers left hanging on the stone-ballasted fishing-rods as an offering to the mighty gods of the Siberian tempests. In practice, however, this might not be feasible unless one could remember all the old clothes of the person whom one wished to trace, and all the ancestral rags and tatters of that person's family. From a careful examination that we made of a number of shrines we became convinced that every pious Buriát keeps a religious rag-bag, which he carries with him when he travels, and to which he has recourse whenever it becomes necessary to decorate the sacred fishing-poles of the storm-gods. I am sure that such miserable, decayed scraps and tatters of raiment as we saw fluttering in the wind over the shrines between Selengínsk and Kiákhta never could have been cut or torn from any garments that were actually in wear.

The weather all day Wednesday was raw and cold, with occasional squalls of rain or snow. We could get little to

eat at the post-stations, and long before it grew dark we were faint, hungry, and chilled to the bone. Nothing could have been more pleasant under such circumstances than to see at last the cheerful glow of the fire-lighted windows in the little log houses of Tróitskosávsk, two miles and a half north of the Mongolian frontier.

The three towns of Tróitskosávsk, Kiákhta, and Maimáchin are so situated as to form one almost continuous settlement extending across the Russo-Mongolian frontier about a hundred miles south and east of Lake Baikál. Tróitskosávsk and Kiákhta are on the northern side of the boundary line, while Maimáchin is on the southern or Mongolian side and is separated from Kiákhta by a hundred and fifty or two hundred yards of unoccupied neutral ground. Of the three towns Tróitskosávsk is the largest, and from an administrative point of view the most important; but Kiákhta is nearest to the border and is best known by name to the world.

Acting upon the advice of a merchant's clerk whose acquaintance we had made on the Lake Baikál steamer, we drove through Tróitskosávsk to Kiákhta and sought shelter in a house called "Sókolof's," which the merchant's clerk had given us to understand was a good and comfortable hotel. When after much search we finally found it, we were surprised to discover that there was not a sign of a hotel about it. The house stood in the middle of a large, wall-inclosed yard, its windows were dark, and although the hour was not a very late one the courtyard gate was shut and closely barred. After shouting, knocking, and kicking at the gate for five or ten minutes we succeeded in arousing a sharp-tongued maid-servant, who seemed disposed at first to regard us as burglars or brigands. Upon becoming assured, however, that we were only peaceable travelers in search of lodgings, she informed us with some asperity that this was not a hotel, but a private house. Mr. Sókolof, she said, sometimes received travelers who

came to him with letters of introduction; but he did not open his doors to people whom nobody knew anything about, and the best thing we could do, in her opinion, was to go back to Tróitskosávsk. As we had no letters of introduction, and as the young woman refused to open the gate or hold any further parley with us, there was obviously nothing for us to do but to recognize the soundness of her judgment and take her advice. We therefore climbed into our teléga, drove back to Tróitskosávsk, and finally succeeded in finding there a Polish exile named Klembótski, who kept a bakery and who had a few rooms that he was willing to rent, even to travelers who were not provided with letters of introduction. As it was after ten o'clock, and as we despaired of finding a better place, we ordered our baggage taken to one of Mr. Klembótski's rooms. It did not prove to be a very cheerful apartment. The floor was made of rough-hewn planks, the walls were of squared logs chinked with hemp-fibers, there was no furniture except a pine table, three stained pine chairs, and a narrow wooden couch or bedstead, and all guests were expected to furnish their own bedding. After a meager supper of tea and rolls we lay down on the hard plank floor and tried to get to sleep, but were forced, as usual, to devote a large part of the night to researches and investigations in a narrowly restricted and uninteresting department of entomology. Thursday forenoon we hired a peculiar Russian variety of Irish jaunting-car, known in Siberia as a dálgúshka, and set out for Kiákhta, where we intended to call upon a wealthy Russian tea-merchant named Lúshnikof, who had been recommended to us by friends in Irkútsk.

Tróitskosávsk, Kiákhta, and Maimáchin are situated in a shallow and rather desolate valley, beside a small stream that falls into the Selengá River. The nearly parallel and generally bare ridges that form this valley limit the vision in every direction except to the southward, where, over the housetops and gray wooden walls of Maimáchin, one may

catch a glimpse of blue, hazy mountains far away in Mongolia. Kiákhta, which stands on the border-line between Mongolia and Siberia, does not appear at first sight to be anything more than a large, prosperous village. It con-



tains a greater number of comfortable-looking two-story log dwelling-houses than are to be found in most East-Siberian villages, and it has one or two noticeable churches of the Russo-Greek type with white walls and belfries surmounted by colored or gilded domes; but one would

never suppose it to be the most important commercial point in Eastern Siberia. Through Kiákhta, nevertheless, pass into or out of Mongolia every year Russian and Chinese products to the value of from twenty to thirty million rúbles (\$10,000,000 to \$15,000,000). Nearly all of the famous "overland" tea consumed in Russia is brought across Mongolia in caravans from northern China, enters the Empire through Kiákhta, and after being carefully repacked and sewn up in raw hides is transported across Siberia a distance of nearly four thousand miles to St. Petersburg, Moscow, or the great annual fair of Nízhni Nóvgorod. Through Kiákhta are also imported into Russia silks, crapes, and other distinctively Chinese products, together with great quantities of compressed, or "brick," tea for the poorer classes of the Russian people and for the Kirghis, Buriáts, and other native tribes. The chief exports to the Chinese Empire are Russian manufactures, medicinal deerhorns, ginseng, furs, and precious metals in the shape of Russian, English, and American coins. Even the silver dollars of the United States find their way into the Flowery Kingdom through Siberia. Among the Russian merchants living in Kiákhta are men of great wealth, some of whom derive from their commercial transactions in general, and from the tea trade in particular, incomes varying from \$75,000 to \$150,000 per annum.

We found Mr. Lúshnikof living in a comfortably furnished two-story house near the center of the town, and upon introducing ourselves as American travelers were received with the sincere and cordial hospitality that seems to be characteristic of Russians everywhere, from Bering Strait to the Baltic Sea. In the course of lunch, which was served soon after our arrival, we discussed the "sights" of Kiákhta and Maimáchin, and were informed by Mr. Lúshnikof that in his opinion there was very little in either town worthy of a foreign traveler's attention. Maimáchin might perhaps interest us if we had never seen a Chinese

or Mongolian city, but Kiákhta did not differ essentially from other Siberian settlements of its class.

After a moment's pause he asked suddenly, as if struck by a new thought, "Have you ever eaten a Chinese dinner?"
"Never," I replied.

"Well," he said, "then there is one new experience that I can give you. I'll get up a Chinese dinner for you in Maimáchin day after to-morrow. I know a Chinese merchant there who has a good cook, and although I cannot promise you upon such short notice a dinner of more than forty courses, perhaps it will be enough to give you an idea of the thing."

We thanked him, and said that although we had had little to eat since entering the Trans-Baikál except bread and tea, we thought that a dinner of forty courses would be fully adequate to satisfy both our appetites and our curiosity.

From the house of Mr. Lúshnikof we went to call upon the Russian boundary commissioner, Mr. Sulkófski, who lived near at hand and who greeted us with as much informal good-fellowship as if we had been old friends. We were very often surprised in these far-away parts of the globe to find ourselves linked by so many persons and associations to the civilized world and to our homes. In the house of Mr. Lúshnikof, for example, we had the wholly unexpected pleasure of talking in English with Mrs. Hamilton, a cultivated Scotch lady, who had come to Kiákhta across China and Mongolia and had been for several years a member of Mr. Lúshnikof's family. In the person of the Russian boundary commissioner we were almost as much surprised to find a gentleman who had met many officers of the Jeannette arctic exploring expedition—including Messrs. Melville and Danenhower; who had seen the relief steamer Rodgers in her winter quarters near Bering Strait; and who was acquainted with Captain Berry of that vessel and with the Herald correspondent, Mr. Gilder.

After another lunch and a pleasant chat of an hour or more with Mr. Sulkófski, Frost and I returned to Tróitskosávsk and spent the remainder of the afternoon in exploring the bazar, or town market, and the queer Chinese and

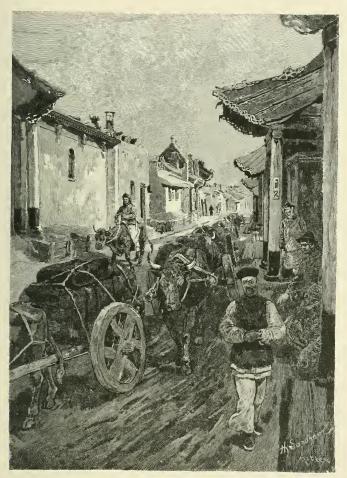


Mongolian shops shown in the above illustration. In one of these shops we were astonished to find an old second-hand copy of Dickens's *All the Year Round*. How it came there I could hardly imagine, but it seemed to me that if the periodical literature of Great Britain was represented in one of the shops of the Tróitskosávsk bazar we ought to find there also a copy of some American magazine left by a

"globe-trotter" from the United States. My professional and patriotic pride would not allow me to admit for a moment that All the Year Round might have a larger circulation in outer Mongolia than The Century Magazine. After long and diligent search in a queer, dark, second-hand booth kept by a swarthy Mongol, I was rewarded by the discovery of a product of American genius that partly satisfied my patriotism, and served as a tangible proof that New England marks the time to which all humanity keeps step. It was an old, second-hand clock, made in Providence, Rhode Island, the battered and somewhat grimy face of which still bore in capital letters the characteristic American legend, "Thirty Hour Joker." Mongolia might know nothing of American literature or of American magazines, but it had made the acquaintance of the American clock; and although this particular piece of mechanism had lost its hands, its "Thirty Hour Joker" was a sufficiently pointed allusion to the national characteristic to satisfy the most ardent patriotism. An American joker does not need hands to point out the merits of his jokes, and this mutilated New England clock, with its empty key-hole eyes and its battered but still humorous visage, seemed to leer at me out of the darkness of that queer, old, second-hand shop as if to say, "You may come to Siberia, you may explore Mongolia, but you can't get away from the American joker." I was a little disappointed not to find in this bazar some representative masterpiece of American literature, but I was more than satisfied a short time afterward when I discovered in a still wilder and more remote part of the Trans-Baikál a copy of Mark Twain's "Life on the Mississippi," and a Russian translation of Bret Harte's "Luck of Roaring Camp."

On Friday, October 2d, Mr. Frost and I again visited Kiákhta and went with the boundary commissioner, Mr. Sulkófski, to call upon the Chinese governor of Maimáchin. The Mongolian town of Maimáchin is separated from Kiákhta by a hundred and fifty or two hundred yards of

neutral ground, through the middle of which is supposed to run the boundary line between the two great empires. Maimáchin is further separated from Kiákhta by a high plank wall and by screens, or pagoda-shaped buildings, that mask the entrances to the streets so that the outside barbarian cannot look into the place without actually entering it, and cannot see anything beyond its wooden walls after he has entered it. It would be hard to imagine a more sudden and startling change than that brought about by a walk of two hundred yards from Kiákhta to Maimáchin. One moment you are in a Russian provincial village with its characteristic shops, log houses, golden-domed churches, dróshkies, soldiers, and familiar peasant faces; the next moment you pass behind the high screen that conceals the entrance to the Mongolian town and find yourself apparently in the middle of the Chinese Empire. You can hardly believe that you have not been suddenly transported on the magical carpet of the "Arabian Nights" over a distance of a thousand miles. The town in which you find yourself is no more like the town that you have just left than a Zuñi pueblo is like a village in New England, and for all that appears to the contrary you might suppose yourself to be separated from the Russian Empire by the width of a whole continent. The narrow, unpaved streets are shut in by gray, one-story houses, whose windowless walls are made of clay mixed with chopped straw, and whose roofs, ornamented with elaborate carving, show a tendency to turn up at the corners; clumsy two-wheel ox-carts, loaded with boxes of tea and guided by swarthy Mongol drivers, have taken the place of the Russian horses and telégus: Chinese traders in skull-caps, loose flapping gowns. and white-soled shoes appear at the doors of the courtyards instead of the Russian merchants in top-boots, loose waistcoats, and shirts worn outside their trousers whom you have long been accustomed to see; and wild-looking sunburned horsemen in deep orange gowns and dishpanshaped hats ride in now and then from some remote encampment in the great desert of Gobi, followed, perhaps, by a poor Mongol from the immediate neighborhood,



A STREET IN MAIMÁCHIN.

mounted upon a slow-pacing ox. Wherever you go, and in whatever direction you look, China has taken the place of Russia, and the scenes that confront you are full of strange, unfamiliar details.

We drove with a Russo-Chinese interpreter to the residence of the surguchéi, or Chinese governor,—which was distinguished from all other houses by having two high poles tipped with gilded balls erected in front of it,—and after being introduced to his Excellency by Mr. Sulkófski were invited to partake of tea, sweetmeats, and máigalo, or Chinese rice-brandy. We exchanged with the governor a number of ceremonious and not at all exciting inquiries and replies relative to his and our health, affairs, and general well-being, drank three or four sáki-cups of máigalo, nibbled at some candied fruits, and then, as the hour for his devotions had arrived, went with him by invitation to the temple and saw him say his prayers before a large wooden idol to an accompaniment made by the slow tolling of a big, deep-toned bell. The object of the bell-ringing seemed to be to notify the whole population of the town that his Excellency the governor was communing with his Joss. When we returned to his house Mr. Frost drew a portrait of him as with an amusing air of conscious majesty he sat upon a tiger-skin in his chair of state, and then, as we had no excuse for lingering longer, we took our leave, each of us receiving a neatly tied package in which were the nuts, sweetmeats, and candied fruits that had been set before us but had not been eaten.

We wasted the rest of the afternoon in trying to get photographs of some of the strange types and groups that were to be seen in the Maimáchin streets. Again and again we were surrounded by forty or fifty Mongols, Buriáts, and nondescript natives from the great southern steppes, and again and again we set up the camera and trained it upon a part of the picturesque throng. Every time Mr. Frost covered his head with the black cloth and took off the brass cap that concealed the instrument's Cyclopean eye, the apprehensive Celestials vanished with as much celerity as if the artist were manipulating a Gatling gun. We could clear a whole street from one end to the

other by merely setting up the camera on its tripod and getting out the black cloth, and I seriously thought of advising the Chinese governor to send to America for a photo-



TYPES OF BURIÁTS, CHINESE, AND MONGOLS IN MAIMÁCHIN.

graphic outfit to be used in quelling riots. He could disperse a mob with it more quickly and certainly than with a battery of mountain howitzers. If I remember rightly, Mr. Frost did not succeed in getting pictures of any animated objects that day except a few Mongol ox-teams and two or

three blind or crippled beggars who could not move rapidly enough to make their escape. At a later hour that same afternoon, in the bazar of Tróitskosávsk, he came near being mobbed while trying to make a pencil drawing of a fierce-looking Mongol trader, and was obliged to come home with his sketch unfinished. We both regretted, as we had regretted many times before, that we had neglected to provide ourselves with a small detective camera. It might have been used safely and successfully in many places where the larger instrument excited fear or suspicion.

Our Chinese dinner in Maimáchin Saturday afternoon was a novel and interesting experience. It was given in the counting-house of a wealthy Chinese merchant, and the guests present and participating comprised six or eight ladies and gentlemen of Mr. Lúshnikof's acquaintance, as well as Mr. Frost and me. The table was covered with a white cloth, and was furnished with plates, cups and saucers, knives and forks, etc., in the European fashion. Ivory chopsticks were provided for those who desired them, but they were used by the Russian and American guests only in a tentative and experimental way. When we had all taken seats at the table a glass flagon containing a peculiar kind of dark-colored Chinese vinegar was passed round, and every guest poured about half a gill of it into a small saucer beside his plate.

"What is the vinegar for?" I asked Mr. Lúshnikof.

"To dip your food in," he replied. "The Chinese in Maimachin eat almost everything with vinegar. It is n't bad."

As I had not the faintest idea what was coming in the shape of food, I reserved my judgment as to the expediency of using vinegar, and maintained an attitude of expectancy. In a few moments the first course was brought in. I will not undertake to say positively what it was, but I find it described in my note-book as "a prickly seaweed or seaplant of some kind, resembling stiff moss." It had presum-

ably been boiled or cooked in some way, but I cannot venture to affirm anything whatever with regard to it except that it was cold and had a most disagreeable appearance. Each of the Russian guests took a small quantity of it, sopped a morsel in the dark-colored vinegar, and ate it, if not with relish, at least with heroic confidence and composure. There was nothing for Mr. Frost and me to do but to follow the example. The next nine courses, taking them in order, I find described in my note-book as follows:

- 1. Shreds of cold meat embedded in small diamond-shaped molds of amber-colored jelly.
 - 2. Black mushrooms of a species to me unknown.
 - 3. Salad of onions and finely shredded herbs.
 - 4. Lichens from birch-trees.
- 5. Thin slices of pale, unwholesome-looking sausage, component materials unknown.
- 6. Small diamonds, circles, and squares of boiled egg, dyed in some way so as to resemble scraps of morocco leather.
 - 7. The tails of crawfish fried brown.
 - 8. Long-fronded seaweed of a peculiar grass-green color.
- 9. Curly fibers of some marine plant that looked like shredded cabbage.

I do not pretend to say that these brief entries in my note-book describe with scientific accuracy the articles of food to which they relate. I did not know, and could not find out, what many of the courses were, and all I could do was to note down the impression that they made upon me, and call them by the names of the things that they seemed most to resemble. All of these preparations, without exception, were served cold and were eaten with vinegar. Over a brazier of coals on a broad divan near the table stood a shallow pan of hot water, in which were half immersed three or four silver pots or pitchers containing the colorless rice-brandy known as máigalo. After every course of the dinner a servant went round the table with one of

these pitchers and filled with the hot liquor a small porcelain cup like a Japanese $s\acute{a}ki$ -cup that had been placed beside every guest's plate.

I had heard a short time before this an anecdote of an ignorant East-Siberian peasant, who in making an exeavation for some purpose found what he supposed to be the almost perfectly preserved remains of a mammoth. With the hope of obtaining a reward he determined to report this extraordinary find to the isprávnik, and in order to make his story more impressive he tasted some of the flesh of the extinct beast so that he could say to the police officer that the animal was in such a state of preservation as to be actually eatable. An investigation was ordered, a scientist from the Irkútsk Geographical Society was sent to the spot, and the remains of the mammoth were found to be a large deposit of the peculiar Siberian mineral known as górni kózha, or "mineral leather." The irritated isprávnik, who felt that he had been made to appear like an ignorant fool in the eyes of the Irkútsk scientists, sent for the peasant and said to him angrily, "You stupid blockhead! Did n't you tell me that you had actually eaten some of this stuff? It is n't a mammoth at all; it 's a mineral — a thing that they take out of mines."

"I did eat it, Bárin," maintained the peasant stoutly; "but," he added, with a sheepish, self-excusatory air, "what can't you eat with butter?"

As the servant in Maimáchin brought round and handed to us successively black mushrooms, crawfish tails, tree-lichens, and seaweed, I thought of the peasant's mammoth, and said to myself, "What can't one eat with vinegar and Chinese brandy?"

After the last of the cold victuals had been served and disposed of, the dishes were cleared away, the saucers were

¹ One of the asbestic forms of horn-dium, and potassium combined with blende. It contains iron, aluminium, silicon. calcium, magnesum, manganese, so-

replenished with vinegar, and the hot courses came on as follows:

1. Meat dumplings, consisting of finely minced veal inclosed in a covering of dough and boiled.

Mr. Frost, by some occult process of divination, discovered, or thought he discovered, that the essential component of these dumplings was young dog, and he firmly refused to have anything whatever to do with them even in combination with vinegar. I reproached him for this timidity, and assured him that such unfounded prejudices were unworthy the character of a man who professed to be a traveler and an investigator, and a man, moreover, who had already spent three years in the Russian Empire. Had I known, however, what was yet to come, I think I should have held my peace.

2. Finely minced meat pressed into small balls and fried.

3. Small meat pies, or pâtés.

4. Boiled fowl, served in a thick whitish gravy with large snails.

At this course I felt compelled to draw the line. The snails had turned black in the process of cooking, and resembled nothing so much as large boiled tomato-vine worms; and although I drank two cupfuls of hot rice-brandy with the hope of stimulating my resolution up to the point of tasting them, my imagination took the bit between its teeth and ran away with my reason.

5. Fat of some kind in soft, whitish, translucent lumps.

6. Roast sucking pig, served whole.

This was perhaps the most satisfactory course of the whole dinner, and as I ate it I thought of Charles Lamb's well-known essay describing the manner in which the Chinese discovered the great art of roasting young pig, and decided that I, too, would burn down a house if necessary in order to obtain it.

7. Small pieces of mutton spitted on long, slender iron needles and roasted over a hot fire.

- 8. Chicken in long, thin, shredded fibers, served with the broth.
 - 9. Boiled rice.
- 10. Peculiar hard, woody mushrooms, or lichens, boiled and served with brown gravy.
- 11. Thin, translucent, and very slippery macaroni, cooked in a Chinese samorár.
 - 12. Cocks' heads with sections of the necks; and finally, 13 to 19. Different kinds of soups served simultaneously.

The soups virtually brought the dinner to an end. The table was again cleared, the vinegar-saucers and sáki-cups were removed, and the servants brought in successively nuts and sweetmeats of various sorts, delicious "flower tea," and French champagne.

The dinner occupied about three hours, and within that time every guest partook of thirty or forty courses, consumed from one to three saucersful of Chinese vinegar, drank from fifteen to twenty-five $s\acute{a}ki$ -cupfuls of hot ricebrandy flavored with rose, and washed down the last mouthfuls of Chinese confectionery with bumpers of champagne to the health of our host.

That we were able to get to our *dróshkies* without assistance, and did not all die of acute indigestion before the next morning, must be regarded as a piece of good luck so extraordinary as to be almost miraculous. My curiosity with regard to a Chinese dinner was completely satisfied. If the Chinese dine in this way every day I wonder that the race has not long since become extinct. One such dinner, eaten late in the fall, would enable a man, I should think, if he survived it, to go into a cave like a bear and hibernate until the next spring.

I little thought when I drove away from the Chinese merchant's counting-house in Maimáchin late that afternoon that I had enjoyed the last recreation I should know for months to come, and that I was looking at the old Mongolian town for the last time. Early Sunday morning

I was taken sick with a violent chill, followed by high fever, severe headache, pain in the back, cough, languor, and great prostration. It was the beginning of a serious illness, which lasted nearly two weeks and from which I did not fully recover for three months. With that sickness began the really hard and trying part of my Siberian experience. Up to that time I had had at least strength to bear the inevitable hardships of life and travel in such a country; but after that time I was sustained chiefly by will power, quinine, and excitement. It is unnecessary to describe the miseries of sickness in such a place as that wretched room adjoining Klembótski's bakery in the frontier town of Tróitskosávsk. There are no entries in my note-book to cover that unhappy period of my Siberian life; but in a letter that I managed to write home from there I find my circumstances briefly described in these words: "It is one thing to be sick at home in a good bed, in clean linen, and with somebody to take care of you; but it is quite another thing to lie down sick like a dog on a hard plank floor, with all your clothes on, and in the paroxysms of fever be tormented to the verge of frenzy by bedbugs." I had no bedding except my sheepskin overcoat and a dirty blanket, and although I tried the hard bedstead, the floor, and the table by turns, I could not anywhere escape the fleas and the bedbugs. I tried at first to treat my illness myself with a small case of medicines that I had brought with me; but learning that there was a Russian physician in the town, I finally sent for him. He began giving me ten-grain doses of quinine, which ultimately broke the fever, and at the end of twelve days, although still very weak, I was able to be up and to walk about.

I fully realized for the first time while lying sick in Klembótski's bakery what a political exile must suffer when taken sick in a roadside *étape*. In addition, however, to all that I had to endure, the exile must live upon coarse food, breathe air that is more or less foul or infected, and per-

haps lie in leg-fetters upon a hard plank sleeping-bench. Mr. Charúshin, a political convict whose acquaintance I made in Nérchinsk, was not released from his leg-fetters

CHOORIA ⋖ Sunous Nerchinsk Werchinsk MAP OF ROUTE FROM TRÓITSKOSÁVSK TO KARÁ, 4 ഗ 0 0 Z SCALE OF ENG.MILES

even when prostrated by typhus fever.

On the 15th of October Mr. Frost and I left Tróitskosávsk for Selengínsk. I felt verv weak and dizzy that morning, and feared that I was about to have a relapse; but thought that even a jolting teléga in the open air could hardly be a worse place in which to be sick than the vermin-infested room that I had so long occupied, and I determined that if I had strength enough to walk out to a vehicle I would make We rode start. about sixty miles

that day, spent the night in the post-station of Povorótnaya, and reached Selengínsk early the next forenoon. In this wretched little Buriát village there were three interesting political exiles whom I desired to see, and we stopped there for one day for the purpose of making their acquaintance. Their names were Constantine Shamárin, a young student from Ekaterínburg; Mr. Kardashóf, a Georgian from the Caucasus; and Madame Breshkófskaya, a highly educated young married lady from the city of Kiev. Mr. Kardashóf and Madame Breshkófskaya had both served out penal terms at the mines of Kará, and I thought that I could perhaps obtain from them some useful information with regard to the best way of getting to those mines, and the character of the officials with whom I should there have to deal.

Mr. Shamárin, upon whom I called first, was a pleasantfaced young fellow, twenty-four or twenty-five years of age, of middle height and quiet, gentlemanly bearing, with honest, trustworthy, friendly eyes that inspired confidence as soon as one looked at him. His history seemed to me to furnish a very instructive illustration of the complete disregard of personal rights that characterizes the Russian Government in its dealings with citizens who happen to be suspected, with or without reason, of political untrustworthiness. While still a university student he was arrested upon a political charge, and after being held for three years in one of the bomb-proof casemates of the Trubetskói bastion in the fortress of Petropávlovsk was finally tried by a court. The evidence against him was so insignificant that the court contented itself with sentencing him to two months' imprisonment. Holding a man in solitary confinement for three years in a bomb-proof casement before trial, and then sentencing him to so trivial a punishment as two months' imprisonment, is in itself a remarkable proceeding. but I will let that pass without comment. Mr. Shamárin certainly had the right, at the expiration of the two months, to be set at liberty, inasmuch as he had borne the penalty inflicted upon him by virtue of a judicial sentence pronounced after due investigation and trial. The Government, however, instead of liberating him, banished him by

administrative process to a village called Barguzín in the territory of the Trans-Baikál, more than four thousand miles east of St. Petersburg. In the summer of 1881 he, with three other politicals, including Madame Breshkófskaya, made an unsuccessful attempt to escape across the Trans-Baikál to the Pacific Ocean with the hope of there getting on board an American vessel. For this he was sent to a native ulús in the sub-arctic province of Yakútsk, where he was seen by some or all of the members of the American expedition sent to the relief of the survivors of the arctic exploring steamer Jeannette. In 1882 or 1883 he was transferred to Selengínsk, and in the autumn of 1884 his term of exile expired, leaving him in an East-Siberian village three thousand miles from home without any means of getting back. The Government does not return to their homes the political exiles whom it has sent to Siberia, unless such exiles are willing to travel by étape, with a returning criminal party. Owing to the fact that parties going towards Russia do not make as close connections with the armed convoys at the étupes as do parties coming away from Russia, their progress is very slow. Colonel Zagárin, the inspector of exile transportation for Eastern Siberia, told me that returning parties are about three hundred days in making the thousand-mile stretch between Irkútsk and Tomsk. Very few political exiles are willing to live a year in feverinfected and vermin-infested étapes even for the sake of getting back to European Russia; and unless they can earn money enough to defray the expenses of such a journey, or have relatives who are able to send them the necessary money, they remain in Siberia. I helped one such political to get home by buying, for a hundred rúbles, a collection of Siberian flowers that he had made, and I should have been glad to help Mr. Shamarin; but he had been at work for more than a year upon an index to the public documents in the archives of the old town of Selengínsk, extending over a period of a hundred and thirty years, and he hoped that the

governor would pay him enough for this labor to enable him to return to European Russia at his own expense. The correspondence of the political exiles in Selengínsk is under police control; that is, all their letters are read and subjected to censorship by the isprávnik. When Mr. Shamárin's term of exile expired he was, of course, de jure and de facto a free man. He sent a petition to the governor of the province asking that the restrictions upon his correspondence be removed. The governor referred the matter to the isprávnik, and the isprárnik declined to remove them. Therefore, for more than a year after Mr. Shamárin's term of banishment had expired, and after he had legally reacquired all the rights of a free citizen, he could receive and send letters only after they had been read and approved by the police. How exasperating this cool, cynical, almost contemptuous disregard of personal rights must be to a high-spirited man the reader can perhaps imagine if he will suppose the case to be his own.

While Mr. Shamárin and I were talking, Madame Breshkófskaya came into the room and I was introduced to her. She was a lady perhaps thirty-five years of age, with a strong, intelligent, but not handsome face, a frank, unreserved manner, and sympathies that seemed to be warm, impulsive, and generous. Her face bore traces of much suffering, and her thick, dark, wavy hair, which had been cut short in prison at the mines, was streaked here and there with gray; but neither hardship, nor exile, nor penal servitude had been able to break her brave, finely tempered spirit, or to shake her convictions of honor and duty. She was, as I soon discovered, a woman of much cultivation, having been educated first in the women's schools of her own country, and then at Zurich in Switzerland. She spoke French, German, and English, was a fine musician, and impressed me as being in every way an attractive and interesting woman. She had twice been sent to the mines of Kará—the second time for an attempt to escape from

forced colonization in the Trans-Baikál village of Barguzín —and after serving out her second penal term had again been sent as a forced colonist to this wretched, God-forsaken Buriát settlement of Selengínsk, where she was under the direct supervision and control of the interesting chief of police who on the occasion of our first visit accompanied us to the Buddhist lamasery of Goose Lake. There was not another educated woman, so far as I know, within a hundred miles in any direction; she received from the Government an allowance of a dollar and a quarter a week for her support; her correspondence was under police control: she was separated for life from her family and friends; and she had, it seemed to me, absolutely nothing to look forward to except a few years, more or less, of hardship and privation, and at last burial in a lonely gravevard beside the Selengá River, where no sympathetic eye might ever rest upon the unpainted wooden cross that would briefly chronicle her life and death. The unshaken courage with which this unfortunate woman contemplated her dreary future, and the faith that she manifested in the ultimate triumph of liberty in her native country, were as touching as they were heroic. Almost the last words that she said to me were: "Mr. Kennan, we may die in exile, and our children may die in exile, and our children's children may die in exile, but something will come of it at last." I have never seen nor heard of Madame Breshkófskaya since that day. She has passed as completely out of my life as if she had died when I bade her good-by; but I cannot recall her last words to me without feeling conscious that all my standards of courage, of fortitude, and of heroic self-sacrifice have been raised for all time, and raised by the hand of a woman. Interviews with such political exiles -and I met many in the Trans-Baikál - were to me a more bracing tonic than medicine. I might be sick and weak, I might feel that we were having a hard life, but such examples of suffering nobly borne for the sake of a principle, and for an oppressed people, would have put a soul under the ribs of death.

We left Selenginsk at four o'clock on the afternoon of Friday, October 16th, and after a ride of a hundred and eight miles, which we made in less than twenty-four hours, reached the district town of Vérkhni Údinsk. The weather, particularly at night, was cold and raw, and the jolting of the springless post-vehicles was rather trying to one who had not yet rallied from the weakness and prostration of fever; but the fresh open air was full of invigoration, and I felt no worse, at least, than at the time of our departure from Tróitskosávsk, although we had made in two days and nights a distance of a hundred and seventy miles. There were two prisons in Vérkhni Údinsk that I desired to inspect; and as early as possible Sunday morning I called upon the isprávnik, introduced myself as an American traveler, exhibited my open letters, and succeeded in making an engagement with that official to meet him at the old prison about noon.

The ostróg of Vérkhni Údinsk, which serves at the same time as a local prison, a forwarding prison, and a place of temporary detention for persons awaiting trial, is an old weather-beaten, decaying log building situated on the high right bank of the Selengá River, about a mile below the town. It does not differ essentially from a log étape of the old Siberian type, except in being a little higher from foundation to roof, and in having a sort of gallery in every kámera, or cell, so arranged as to serve the purpose of a second story. This gallery, which was reached by a steep flight of steps, seemed to me to have been put in as an afterthought in order to increase the amount of floor space available for nári, or sleeping-platforms. The prison had evidently been put in as good order as possible for our inspection; half the prisoners were out in the courtyard, the doors and windows of nearly all the kámeras had been thrown open to admit the fresh air, and the floors of the corridors and cells

did not seem to me to be disgracefully dirty. The prison was originally built to accommodate 170 prisoners. At the time of our visit it contained 250, and the *isprávnik* admitted, in reply to my questions, that in the late fall and winter it frequently held 700. The prisoners were then compelled to lie huddled together on the floors, under the low sleeping-platforms, in the corridors, and even out in the courtyard. What the condition of things would be when 700 poor wretches were locked up for the night in an air space intended for 170, and in winter, when the windows could not be opened without freezing to death all who were forced to lie near them, I could partly imagine. The prison at such times must be a perfect hell of misery.

Mr. M. I. Orfánof, a well-known Russian officer, who inspected this *ostróg* at intervals for a number of years previous to our visit, has described it as follows in a book published at Moscow under all the limitations of the censorship:

The first ostróg in the Trans-Baikál is that of Vérkhni Údinsk. It stands on the outskirts of the town, on the steep, high bank of the Selengá River. Over the edge of this bank, distant only five or six fathoms from the ostróg, are thrown all the prison filth and refuse, so that the first thing that you notice as you approach it at any time except in winter is an intolerable stench. The prison itself is an extremely old two-story log building intended to accommodate 140 prisoners. During my stay in Siberia I had occasion to visit it frequently. I never saw it when it held less than 500, and at times there were packed into it more than 800.2 I remember very well a visit that I once made to it with the governor of the Trans-Baikál. He arrived in winter and went to the prison early in the morning, so that the outer door of the corridor was opened [for the first time that day in his presence. The stench that met him was so great that, in spite of his desire to conceal from the prisoners his recognition of the faet that their accommodations were worse than those provided for dogs, he could not at once enter the building. He ordered the opposite door to be thrown open, and did not himself enter until a strong wind had been blowing for some

¹ The *isprávnik* told me 170. The lesser number is probably nearer the truth. ² The italies are Mr. Orfánof's own.

time through the prison. The first thing that he saw in one eorner of the corridor was an overflowing parásha,¹ and through the ceiling was dripping filth from a similar parásha in the story above. In that corner of the corridor he found six men lying on the floor asleep. He was simply astounded. "How can people sleep," he exclaimed, "on this wet, foul floor and under such insupportable conditions?" He shouted indignantly at the warden and the other prison authorities, but he could change nothing.

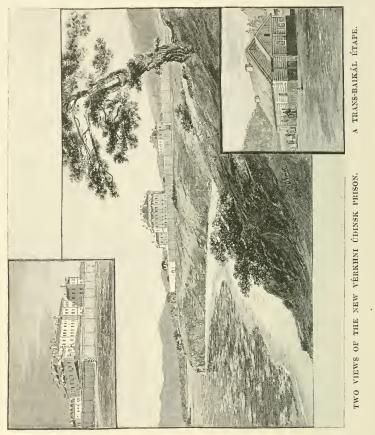
It has been argued by some of my critics that I exaggerate the bad condition of Siberian prisons and étapes; but I think I have said nothing worse than the words that I have above quoted from a book written by an officer in the service of the Russian Government and published at Moscow in 1883 under all the limitations and restrictions of the censorship.²

Through this prison of Vérkhni Údinsk pass every year educated and refined men and women sent to the Trans-Baikál for political offenses, and through it Madame Breshkófskaya passed four times on her way to and from the mines of Kará. I am glad, however, to be able to say that the old ostróg at Vérkhni Údinsk will soon become, if it has not already become, a thing of the past. A large new forwarding prison had just been finished at the time of our arrival, and it was to be opened, the isprávnik said, as soon as the necessary arrangements could be made for the larger guard that it would require.

As soon as we had finished our inspection of the old ostróg, we went with the isprávnik to see the new prison that was intended to take its place. It was a large four-story structure of brick, stuccoed and painted white, with two spacious wings, a large courtyard, and a separate building for the accommodation of political prisoners and the prison guard. The kámeras were all large, well lighted, and well ventilated, and every one of them above the base-

¹ This is the name given by Russian 2 V Dall (Afar), by M. I. Orfánof, pp. prisoners to the excrement tub. 220-222. Moscow: 1883.

ment story had an extensive outlook over the surrounding country through at least three large windows. The corridors were twelve or fifteen feet wide; the stairways were of stone with iron balustrades; the solitary-confinement cells



were as spacious as an ordinary American hall-bedroom; the arrangements for heating, ventilation, and cleanliness seemed to me to be as nearly perfect as they could be made; and as a whole the prison impressed me as being the very best I had seen in Russia, and one of the best I had ever seen in any country. Its cost was about 200,000 råbles (\$100,000), and it was intended to accommodate 440

prisoners. I expressed my satisfaction to the *isprávnik*, and said that I had not seen so good a prison in the Empire.

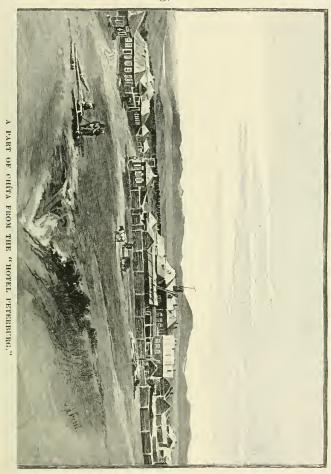
"Yes," he replied; "if they do not overcrowd it, it will be very comfortable. But if we have to shut up 700 prisoners in the old prison we shall probably be expected to put 3000 into this one, and then the state of things will be almost as bad as ever." Whether the isprávnik's fears have been justified by events, I do not know; but the fact remains that the new prison at Vérkhni Údinsk is far and away the best building of its kind that we saw in the Empire except at St. Petersburg, and we were more than gratified to see at last some tangible evidence that the Russian Government does not regard the sufferings of its exiled criminals with absolute indifference.

We left Vérkhui Údinsk on Monday, October 19th, for a ride about three hundred miles to the town of Chita, which is the capital of the Trans-Baikál. The weather was more wintry than any that we had yet experienced; but no snow had fallen, the sky was generally clear, and we did not suffer much from cold except at night. At first the road ran up the shallow, barren, uninteresting valley of the Uda River, between nearly parallel ranges of low mountains, and presented, so far as we could see, little that was interesting. The leaves had all fallen from the trees; the flowers, with the exception of here and there a frost-bitten dandelion, had entirely disappeared; and winter was evidently close at hand. We traveled night and day without rest, stopping only now and then to visit a Buddhist lamasery by the roadside or to inspect an étape. The Government has recently expended three or four hundred thousand rúbles (\$150,000 to \$200,000) in the erection of a line of new étapes through the Trans-Baikál. These buildings, the general appearance of which is shown in one of the three combined illustrations on page 126, are rather small and are not well spoken of by the officers of the exile adminis-

tration; but they seemed to us to be a great improvement upon the *étapes* between Tomsk and Irkútsk.

On Thursday, October 22d, about fifty miles from Chita we crossed a high mountainous ridge near the post-station of Domnokluchéfskava, and rode down its eastern slope to one of the tributaries of the great river Amur. We had crossed the watershed that divides the river systems of the arctic ocean from the river systems of the Pacific, and from that time America began to seem nearer to us across the Pacific than across Siberia. American goods of all kinds, brought from California, suddenly made their appearance in the village shops; and as I saw the American tin-ware. lanterns, and "Yankee notions," and read the English labels on the cans of preserved peaches and tomatoes, it seemed to me as if in the immediate future we ought from some high hill to catch sight of San Francisco and the Golden Gate. A few kerosene lamps and a shelf full of canned fruits and vegetables brought us in imagination five thousand miles nearer home.

About noon we arrived cold, tired, and hungry at the Trans-Baikál town of Chita, and took up our quarters in a hotel kept by a Polish exile and known as the "Hotel Peterburg." Chita, which is the capital of the Trans-Baikal and the residence of the governor, is a large, straggling, provincial town of about four thousand inhabitants, and, as will be seen from the illustration on page 129, does not differ essentially from other Siberian towns of its class. It has a public library, a large building used occasionally as a theater, and fairly good schools; politically and socially it is perhaps the most important place in the territory of which it is the capital. Its chief interest for us, however, lay in the fact that it is a famous town in the history of the exile system. To Chita were banished, between 1825 and 1828, most of the gallant young noblemen who vainly endeavored to overthrow the Russian autocracy and to establish a constitutional form of government at the accession to the throne of the Emperor Nicholas in December, 1825. Two of the log houses in which these so-called Decembrist exiles lived are still standing, and one of them is now occu-



pied as a carpenter's shop, and serves as a general rendezvous for later politicals who followed the example set by the Decembrists and met the same fate.

The colony of exiles in Chita at the time of our visit comprised some of the most interesting men and women whom we met in the Trans-Baikál. We brought letters of 130 Siberia

introduction to them from many of their comrades in other parts of Siberia, were received by them with warm-hearted hospitality and perfect trust, and spent with them many long winter evenings in the upper room of the old Decembrist house, talking of the Russian revolutionary movement, of the fortress of Petropávlovsk, of the Kharkóf central prison, and of the mines of Kará.

Owing to the absence of the governor of the territory, we could not obtain in Chíta permission to visit and inspect the Kará prisons and mines; but the governor's chief of staff, upon whom I called, did not seem to have any objection to our going there and making the attempt. He said he would telegraph the commanding officer about us, and gave me one of his visiting-cards as a substitute for a letter of introduction. It did not seem to me likely that a simple visiting-card, without even so much as a penciled line, would unlock the doors of the dread Kará prisons; but it was all that we could get, and on the 24th of October we set out for our remaining ride of three hundred miles to the mines.

CHAPTER V

THE CONVICT MINES OF KARÁ

THE mines of Kará are distant from Chita, the capital of the Trans-Baikál, about 300 miles; but for more than 200 miles the traveler in approaching them follows a fairly good post-road, which runs at first through the valley of the Ingodá and then along the northern or left bank of the Shilka River, one of the principal tributaries of the Amúr. At a small town called Strétinsk, where the Shílka first becomes navigable, this post-road abruptly ends, and beyond that point communication with the Kará penal settlements is maintained by boats in summer and by sledges drawn over the ice in winter. For two or three weeks in autumn, while the ice is forming, and for a somewhat shorter period in the spring, after the river breaks up, the Kará mines are virtually isolated from all the rest of the world, and can be reached only by a difficult and dangerous bridle path, which runs for a distance of seventy or eighty miles, parallel with the river, across a series of steep and generally forest-clad mountain ridges. We hoped to reach Strétinsk in time to descend the Shilka to the Kará River in a boat; and when we left Chíta, on Saturday, October 24th, there seemed to be every probability that we should succeed in so doing. The weather, however, turned suddenly colder; snow fell to a depth of an inch and a half or two inches; and Wednesday morning, when we alighted from our teléga on the northern bank of the Shílka opposite Strétinsk, winter had set in with great

severity. The mercury in our thermometer indicated zero (Fahr.); our fur coats and the bodies of our horses were white with frost; and the broad, rapid current of the Shílka was so choked with masses of heavy ice as to be



almost, if not quite, impassable. A large open skiff was making a perilous attempt to cross from Strétinsk to our side of the river, and a dozen or more peasants, who stood shivering around a small camp-fire on the beach, were waiting for it, with the hope that it would come safely to land and that the ferrymen might be persuaded to make a

return trip with passengers. After watching for a quarter of an hour the struggles of this boat with the ice, Mr. Frost and I decided that it would be hazardous to attempt, in an open skiff, the passage of a rapid and ice-choked river half a mile wide, even if the boatman were willing to take us; and we therefore sought shelter in the small log house of a young Russian peasant named Záblikof, who good-humoredly consented to give us a night's lodging provided we had no objection to sleeping on the floor with the members of his family. We were too much exhausted and too nearly frozen to object to anything; and as for sleeping on the floor, we had become so accustomed to it that we should have felt out of place if we had tried to sleep anywhere else. We therefore had our baggage transported to Záblikof's house, and in half an hour were comfortably drinking tea in the first decently clean room we had seen since leaving Nérchinsk.

We devoted most of the remainder of the day to a discussion of our situation and of the possibility of reaching the Kará mines at that season of the year by an overland journey across the mountains.

Descending the river in a boat was manifestly impracticable on account of the great quantity of running ice; we could not waste two or three weeks in inaction, and the horseback ride to the mines over the mountains seemed to be the only feasible alternative. There were, on our side of the river, a few horses that Záblikof thought might be hired; but they belonged to a merchant who lived in Strétinsk, and in order to get permission to use them, as well as to obtain the necessary saddles and equipments and secure the services of a guide, it would be necessary to cross the Shílka to the town. This, in the existing condition of the river, was a somewhat perilous undertaking; but Záblikof offered to accompany me with two or three of his men, and early Thursday morning we carried his light, open skiff down to the beach for the purpose of making the attempt.

The weather had moderated a little, but it was still very cold; the river had become an almost continuous field of swiftly moving ice, intersected by narrow lanes of black open water; and a belt of fixed ice extended from the shore a distance of forty or fifty yards, becoming thinner and thinner as it approached the water's edge. Out over this treacherous surface we cautiously pushed our skiff, holding ourselves in readiness to spring into it quickly all together at the instant when the ice should give way under our feet. Four or five yards from the black, eddying current the ice yielded, we felt a sudden sinking sensation, and. then, with a great confused crash, we went into the water, Záblikof shouting excitedly, "Now! Into the boat!" The skiff gave a deep roll, first to one side and then to the other, as we all sprang into it; but fortunately it did not capsize, and in another moment we were whirled away and swept rapidly down-stream amid huge grinding ice-tables, which we fended off, as well as we could, with oars and boathooks. As soon as the first excitement of the launch was over, two of the men settled down to steady rowing, while Záblikof, boat-hook in hand, stood in the bow as pilot, and guided our frail craft through the narrow lanes of water between the swiftly running ice-floes. We were carried down-stream about half a mile before we could reach the opposite shore, and when we did reach it the making of a landing on the thin, treacherous edge of the fast ice proved to be a more difficult and dangerous task than even the launching of the skiff. Three or four times while we were clinging with boat-hooks to the crumbling edge of the icefoot I thought we should certainly be crushed or capsized by the huge white fields and tables that came grinding down upon us from above; but we finally broke our way into the stationary ice-belt far enough to get shelter. Záblikof sprang out upon a hummock and made fast a line, and after being immersed in the freezing water up to my hips as the result of an awkward jump, I gained a footing

upon ice that was firm enough to sustain my weight. The weather was so cold that getting wet was a serious matter; and leaving Záblikof and the men to pull out the boat, I started at a brisk run for the town and took refuge in the first shop I could find. After drying and warming myself I sent a telegram to Mr. Wurts, the Secretary of the United States Legation in St. Petersburg, to apprise him of our whereabouts; found the owner of the horses and made a bargain with him for transportation to the first peasant village down the river in the direction of the mines; hired an old guide named Nikífer; procured the necessary saddles and equipments, and late in the afternoon made, without accident, the perilous return trip across the river to Záblikof's house.

As early as possible on Friday we saddled our horses and set out for the mines, taking with us nothing except our blanket rolls and note-books, a bag of provisions, the camera, and about a dozen dry plates. The weather had again moderated and our thermometer indicated a temperature of eighteen degrees above zero; but the sky was dark and threatening, a light snow was falling, and as we rode up on the summit of the first high ridge and looked ahead into the wild, lonely mountainous region that we were to traverse, I felt a momentary sinking of the heart. I was still weak from my sickness in Tróitskosávsk, winter had set in, and I feared that my slender stock of reserve strength would not carry me through a ride of eighty miles on horseback over such a trail as this was represented to be. Moreover, our winter equipment was scanty and not at all adapted to such a journey. Presuming that we should be able to descend the Shilka in a boat, we had not provided ourselves with fur sleeping-bags; our sheepskin overcoats were not long enough to protect our knees; we had not been able to obtain fur hoods; and our felt boots were so large and heavy that they would not go into our stirrups, and we were forced either to ride without them or to dis-

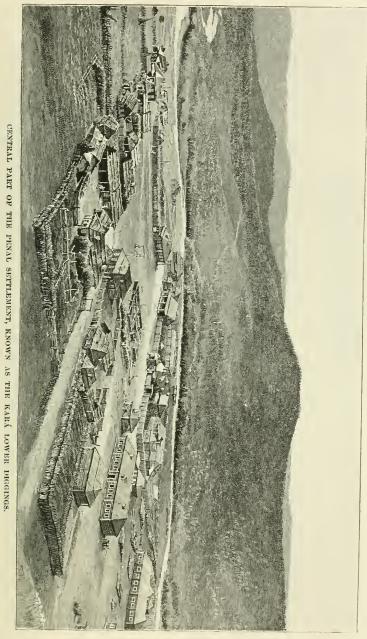
pense with the support that the stirrups might afford. Fortunately the trail that we followed was at first fairly good, the weather was not very cold, and we succeeded in making a distance of twenty miles without a great deal of suffering. We stopped for the night in the small log village called Lómi, on the bank of the Shilka, slept on the floor of a peasant's house, in the same room with two adults and five children, and Saturday morning, after a breakfast of tea, black bread, and cold fish-pie, resumed our journey, with fresh horses and a new guide. The weather had cleared off cold during the night, and our thermometer, when we climbed into our saddles, indicated a temperature of eight degrees below zero. The bodies of the horses were white and shaggy with frost, icicles hung from their nostrils, and they seemed as impatient to get away as we were. With our departure from Lómi began the really difficult part of our journey. The trail ran in a tortuous course across a wilderness of rugged mountains, sometimes making long detours to the northward to avoid deep or precipitous ravines; sometimes climbing in zigzags the steep sides of huge transverse ridges; and occasionally coming out upon narrow shelf-like cornices of rock, high above the dark, ice-laden waters of the Shilka, where a slip or stumble of our horses would unquestionably put an end to our Siberian investigations. That we did not meet with any accident in the course of this ride to Kará seems to me a remarkable evidence of good luck. Our horses were unshod, and the trail in many places was covered with ice formed by the overflow and freezing of water from mountain springs, and then hidden by a thin sheet of snow, so that it was impossible to determine from the most careful inspection of a steep and dangerous descent whether or not it would afford secure foothold for our horses. Throughout Saturday and Sunday we walked most of the time; partly because we were too nearly frozen to sit in the saddle, and partly because we dared not take the risks of the slippery trail. Three days of riding, walking, and climbing over rugged mountains, in a temperature that ranged from zero to ten degrees below, finally exhausted my last reserve of strength; and when we reached the peasant village of Shílkina at a late hour Sunday night, a weak and thready pulse, running at the rate of 120, warned me that I was near



LIVING-ROOM OF RUSSIAN PEASANT'S HOUSE AT UST KARÁ.

the extreme limit of my endurance. Fortunately the worst part of our journey was over. Ust Kará, the most southerly of the Kará penal settlements, was distant from Shílkina only ten or twelve miles; the trail between the two places presented no unusual difficulties; and about noon on Monday we dismounted from our tired horses in the large village at the mouth of the Kará River, hobbled with stiffened and benumbed legs into the house of a peasant known to our guide, and threw ourselves down to rest.

The mines of Kará, which are the private property of his Imperial Majesty the Tsar, and are worked for his benefit, consist of a series of open gold placers, situated at irregular intervals along a small rapid stream called the Kará River, which rises on the water-shed of the Yáblonoi mountains, runs in a southeasterly direction for a distance of forty or fifty miles, and finally empties into the Shílka between Strétinsk and the mouth of the Argún. The name "Kará," derived from a Tatár adjective meaning "black," was originally used merely to designate this stream; but it is now applied more comprehensively to the whole chain of prisons, mines, and convict settlements that lie scattered through the Kará valley. These prisons, mines, and convict settlements, taking them in serial order from south to north, are known separately and distinctively as Ust Kará or Kará mouth, the Lower Prison, the Political Prison, the Lower Diggings, Middle Kará, Upper Kará, and the Upper or Amúrski Prison. The administration of the whole penal establishment centers in the Lower Diggings, where the governor of the common-criminal prisons resides, and where there is a convict settlement of two or three hundred inhabitants and a company or two of soldiers in barracks. It seemed to me best to make this place our headquarters; partly because it was the residence of the governor, without whose consent we could do nothing, and partly because it was distant only about a mile from the political prison in which we were especially interested. We therefore left our horses and our guide at Ust Kará with orders to wait for us, and after dining and resting for an hour or two, set out in a teléga for the Lower Diggings. The road ran up the left bank of the Kará River through a shallow valley averaging about half a mile in width, bounded by low hills that were covered with a scanty second growth of young larches and pines, and whitened by a light fall of snow. The floor of the valley was formed by huge shapeless mounds of gravel and sand, long ago turned over and washed in the



search for gold, and it suggested a worked-out placer in the most dreary and desolate part of the Black Hills.

We reached the settlement at the Lower Diggings just before dark. It proved to be a spacious but straggling Siberian village of low whitewashed cabins, long unpainted log barracks, officers' tin-roofed residences, with wattle-inclosed yards, and a black, gloomy, weather-beaten log prison of the usual East-Siberian type. The buildings belonging to the Government were set with some show of regularity in wide open spaces or along a few very broad streets; and they gave to the central part of the village a formal and official air that was strangely at variance with the disorderly arrangement of the unpainted shanties and dilapidated driftwood cabins of the ticket-of-leave convicts which were huddled together, here and there, on the outskirts of the settlement or along the road that led to Ust Kará. On one side of an open square, around which stood the prison and the barracks, forty or fifty convicts in long gray overcoats with vellow diamonds on their backs were at work upon a new log building, surrounded by a cordon of Cossaeks in sheepskin shúbas, felt boots, and muff-shaped fur eaps, who stood motionless at their posts, leaning upon their Berdan rifles and watching the prisoners. At a little distance was burning a camp-fire, over which was hanging a tea-kettle, and around which were standing or crouching a dozen more Cossacks, whose careless attitudes and stacked rifles showed that they were temporarily off duty. In the waning light of the cold, gloomy autumnal afternoon, the dreary snowy square, the gray group of convicts working listlessly as if hopeless or exhausted, and the cordon of Cossacks leaning upon their bayoneted rifles made up a picture that for some reason exerted upon me a chilling and depressing influence. It was our first glimpse of convict life at the mines.

We drove at once to the house of the governor of the prisons, for the purpose of inquiring where we could find shelter for the night. Major Pótulof, a tall, fine-looking,

soldieriy man about fifty years of age, received us cordially, and said that he had been apprised of our coming by a telegram from the acting governor in Chita; but he did not really expect us, because he knew the Shilka was no longer navigable, and he did not believe foreign travelers would



undertake, at that season of the year, the difficult and dangerous journey across the mountains. He expressed great pleasure, however, at seeing us, and invited us at once to accept the hospitalities of his house. I told him that we did not intend to quarter ourselves upon him, but merely wished to inquire where we could find shelter for the night. He laughed pleasantly, and replied that there were no

hotels or boarding-houses in Kará except those provided by the Government for burglars, counterfeiters, and murderers; and that he expected us, of course, to accept his hospitality and make ourselves at home in his house. This was not at all in accordance with our wishes or plans. We had



MAJOR PÓTULOF.

hoped to find some place of abode where we should not be constantly under official surveillance; and I did not see how we were secretly to make the acquaintance of the political convicts if we consented to become the guests of the governor of the prisons. As there did not, however, seem to be any alternative, we accepted Major Pótulof's invitation, and in ten minutes were comfortably quartered in a large,

well-furnished house, where our eyes were gladdened by the sight of such unfamiliar luxuries as long mirrors, big soft rugs, easy-chairs, and a piano.

The Kará prisons and penal settlements at the time of our visit contained, approximately, 1800 hard-labor convicts. Of this number about one-half were actually in close

1 According to the annual report of men and children who had come to the the Chief Prison Administration the mines voluntarily with their husbands and fathers. (See Report of the Chief and penal settlements on the 1st of Prison Administration for 1886, pp. 46, January, 1886,—about two months 47. St. Petersburg: Press of the Min-

number of convicts in the Kará prisons after our visit, - was 2507. This num- istry of the Interior, 1888.) ber, however, included 600 or 800 wo-

confinement, while the remainder were living in barracks, or in little cabins of their own, outside the prison walls.

The penal term of a Russian convict at the mines is divided into two periods or stages. During the first of these periods he is officially regarded as "on probation," and is held in prison under strict guard. If his conduct is such as to merit the approval of the prison authorities, he is released from confinement at the end of his probationary term and is enrolled in a sort of ticket-of-leave organization known as the "free command." He is still a hard-labor convict; he receives his daily ration from the prison, and he cannot step outside the limits of the penal settlement without a permit; but he is allowed to live with other "reforming "criminals in convict barracks, or with his family in a separate house of his own; he can do extra work for himself in his leisure hours, if he feels so disposed, and he enjoys a certain amount of freedom. At the end of this second or "reforming" period he is sent as a "forced colonist" to some part of Eastern Siberia for the remainder of his life.

The prisons connected with the Kará penal establishment at the time of our visit were seven in number, and were scattered along the Kará River for a distance of about twenty miles. The slow but steady movement of the working convict force up-stream in the search for gold had left the Lower Diggings and Ust Kará prisons so far behind that their inmates could no longer walk in leg-fetters to and from the placers, and a large number of them were therefore living in enforced idleness. The direct supervision of the common-criminal prisons was intrusted to smatritels, or wardens, who reported to Major Pótulof; and the prison buildings were guarded by detachments of Cossacks from the Kará battalion, which numbered about one thousand men. The two political prisons - one at the Lower Diggings for men, and the other at Ust Kará for women - were not under the control of Major Pótulof,

but were managed by a gendarme officer named Captain Nikólin, who had been sent out from St. Petersburg for this particular duty, and who was at the head of a carefully selected prison guard of 140 gendarmes. The political prisons had also their free command, which at the time of our visit consisted of twelve or fifteen men and women, who had finished their terms of probation and were living in little huts or cabins of their own on the outskirts of the Lower Diggings. All of these facts were known to us long before we reached the mines, and we shaped our course in accordance with them.

The objects that we had in view at Kará were, first, to go through the common-criminal prisons and see the criminals actually at work in the mines; secondly, to make the acquaintance of the political convicts of the free command; and, thirdly, to visit the political prison and see how the condemned revolutionists lived, even if we were not permitted to talk with them. That we should succeed in attaining the first of these objects I felt confident, of the second I was not at all sure, and of the third I had little hope; but I determined to try hard for all. What instructions Major Pótulof had received with regard to us I did not know; but he treated us with great cordiality, asked no awkward questions, and when, on the day after our arrival, I asked permission to visit the prisons and mines, he granted it without the least apparent surprise or hesitation, ordered out his horses and dróshky, and said that it would give him great pleasure to accompany us.

It is not my purpose to describe minutely all of the prisons in Kará that we were permitted to inspect, but I will sketch hastily the two that seemed to me to be typical, respectively, of the worst class and of the best.

The Ust Kará prison, which, in point of sanitary condition and overcrowding, is perhaps the worst place of confinement in the whole Kará valley, is situated on low, marshy ground in the outskirts of the penal settlement of the same name, near the junction of the Kará River with the Shílka. It was built nearly half a century ago, when the Government first began to work the Kará gold placers with convict labor. As one approaches it from the south it looks like a long, low horse-car stable made of squared but unpainted logs, which are now black, weather-beaten, and decaying from age. Taken in connection with its inclosed vard it makes a nearly perfect square of about one hundred feet, two sides of which are formed by the prison buildings and two sides by a stockade about twenty-five feet in height, made of closely set logs, sharpened at the top like colossal lead-pencils. As we approached the courtyard gate, an armed Cossack, who stood in the black-barred sentry-box beside it, presented arms to Major Pótulof and shouted. "Starshe!"—the usual call for the officer of the day. A Cossack corporal ran to the entrance with a bunch of keys in his hand, unlocked the huge padlock that secured the small door in the larger wooden gate, and admitted us to the prison courtyard. As we entered three or four convicts, with half-shaven heads, ran hastily across the yard to take their places in their cells for inspection. We ascended two or three steps incrusted with an indescribable coating of filth and ice an inch and a half thick, and entered, through a heavy plank door, a long, low, and very dark corridor, whose broken and decaying floor felt wet and slippery to the feet, and whose atmosphere, although warm, was very damp, and saturated with the strong peculiar odor that is characteristic of Siberian prisons. A person who has once inhaled that odor can never forget it; and yet it is so unlike any other bad smell in the world that I hardly know with what to compare it. I can ask you to imagine cellar air, every atom of which has been half a dozen times through human lungs and is heavy with carbonic acid; to imagine that air still further vitiated by foul, pungent, slightly ammoniacal exhalations from long unwashed human bodies; to imagine that it has a sugges-

tion of damp, decaying wood and more than a suggestion of human excrement—and still you will have no adequate idea of it. To unaccustomed senses it seems so saturated with foulness and disease as to be almost insupportable. As we entered the corridor, slipped upon the wet, filthy



A KÁMERA IN THE UST KARÁ PRISON.

floor, and caught the first breath of this air, Major Pótulof turned to me with a scowl of disgust, and exclaimed, "Atvratítelni tiurmá!" [It is a repulsive prison!]

The Cossack corporal who preceded us threw open the heavy wooden door of the first kámera and shouted, "Smírno!" [Be quiet!] the customary warning of the guard to the prisoners when an officer is about to enter the cell. We stepped across the threshold into a room about 24 feet long, 22 feet wide, and 8 feet high, which contained 29 convicts. The air here was so much worse than the air in the corridor that it made me faint and sick. The room was lighted by two nearly square, heavily grated windows with double sashes, that could not be raised or opened, and

there was not the least apparent provision anywhere for ventilation. Even the brick oven, by which the cell was warmed, drew its air from the corridor. The walls of the kámera were of squared logs and had once been whitewashed; but they had become dark and grimy from lapse of time, and were blotched in hundreds of places with dull red blood-stains where the convicts had crushed bedbugs; the floor was made of heavy planks, and, although it had recently been swept, it was incrusted with dry, hard-trodden filth. Out from the walls on three sides of the room projected low, sloping wooden platforms about six feet wide, upon which the convicts slept, side by side, in closely packed rows, with their heads to the walls and their feet extended towards the middle of the cell. They had neither pillows nor blankets, and were compelled to lie down upon these sleeping-benches at night without removing their clothing, and without other covering than their coarse gray overcoats. The cell contained no furniture of any kind except these sleeping-platforms, the brick oven, and a large wooden tub. When the door was locked for the night each one of these 29 prisoners would have, for 8 or 10 hours' consumption, about as much air as would be contained in a packing-box 5 feet square and 5 feet high. If there was any way in which a single cubic foot of fresh air could get into that cell after the doors had been closed for the night I failed to discover it.

We remained in the first $k\acute{a}mera$ only two or three minutes. I think I was the first to get out into the corridor, and I still vividly remember the sense of relief with which I drew a long breath of that corridor air. Heavy and vitiated as it had seemed to me when I first entered the prison, it was so much better than the atmosphere of the overcrowded cell that it gave me an impression of freshness and comparative purity. We then went through hastily, one after another, the seven $k\acute{a}meras$ that composed the prison. They all resembled the first one except that they

varied slightly in dimensions, in shape, or in the number of prisoners that they contained. In the cell shown in the illustration on page 146 I noticed a shoemaker's bench on the sleeping-platform between the windows, and the foulness of the air was tempered and disguised, to some extent, by the fresh odor of leather. Even in this kámera, however, I breathed as little as possible, and escaped into the corridor at the first opportunity. The results of breathing such air for long periods of time may be seen in the Kará prison hospital, where the prevalent diseases are scurvy, typhus and typhoid fevers, anæmia, and consumption. No one whom we met in Kará attempted to disguise the fact that most of these cases of disease are the direct result of the life that the convicts are forced to live in the dirty and overcrowded kámeras. The prison surgeon admitted this to me frankly, and said: "We have more or less scurvy here all the year round. You have been through the prisons, and must know what their sanitary condition is. Of course such uncleanliness and overcrowding result in disease. We have 140 patients in the hospital now; frequently in spring we have 250."1

Most of these cases come from a prison population of less than one thousand; and the hospital records do not, by any means, represent the aggregate of sickness in the Kará penal settlements. Many convicts of the free command lie ill in their own little huts or cabins, and even

¹ In 1857, when the famous, or infamous, Razgildéief undertook to get for the Tsar out of the Kará mines 100 passed, buds (about 3600 pounds) of gold, more than 1000 convicts sickened and died in the Kará prisons from scurvy, typhus fever, and overwork. Alexander the Liberator was then Tsar, and it might be supposed that such awful misery and mortality in his own mines would inevitably attract his attention, and that he would devote at least a part of the gold bought with a thousand men's lives to the reformation of round."

such a murderous penal system. Nothing, however, was done. Ten years passed, and at the expiration of that time, according to Maximof, there were at the Kará mines "the same order of things, the same prisons, and the same scurvy." (See "Siberia and Penal Servitude," by S. Maximof, Vol. I, p. 102. St. Petersburg: 1871.) Nearly twenty more years had elapsed when we visited the mines in 1885, and the report still was, "We have more or less scurvy here all the year round."

in the prison *kámeras* there are scores of sick whose cases are not regarded as serious enough to necessitate their removal to a hospital that is perhaps overcrowded already. A convict in the early stages of scurvy may therefore lie in a prison *kámera* for a week or two, poisoning with his foul, diseased breath the air that must be breathed by men who are still comparatively well.

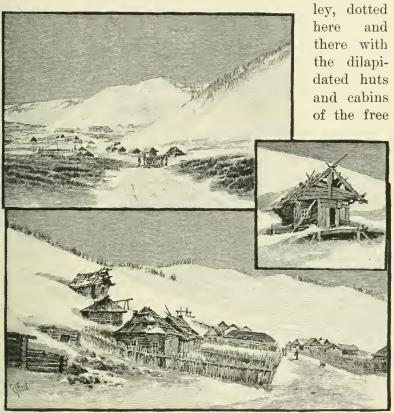
After visiting all the kámeras in the men's prison, we came out at last into the pure, cold, delicious air, crossed the courtyard, went through another gate in the stockade, and entered the women's prison — a similar but smaller log building, which contained two large cells opening into each other. These rooms were well warmed and lighted, were higher than the cells in the men's prison, and had more than twice as much air space per capita; but their sanitary condition was little, if any, better. The air in them had perhaps been less vitiated by repeated respiration, but it was so saturated with foul odors from a neglected watercloset that one's senses could barely tolerate it. The floor was uneven and decayed, and in places the rotten planks had either settled or given way entirely, leaving dark holes under which there was a vacant space between the floor and the swampy ground. Into these holes the women were evidently in the habit of throwing slops and garbage. I went and stood for a moment over one of them, but I could see nothing in the darkness beneath; and the damp air, laden with the effluvium of decaying organic matter that was rising from it, seemed to me so suggestive of typhoid fever and diphtheria that I did not venture to take a second breath in that vicinity. The kámeras in the women's prison had no furniture of any kind except the plank sleeping-platforms, which, of course, were entirely destitute of bedding. I did not see in either room a single pillow or blanket. In these two cells were imprisoned forty-eight girls and women, six or seven of whom were carrying in their arms pallid, sickly looking babies.

At every step in our walk through the two prisons Major Pótulof was besieged by unfortunate convicts who had complaints to make or petitions to present. One man had changed names with a comrade on the road while intoxicated, and had thus become a hard-labor convict when he should have been merely a forced colonist, and he wanted. his case investigated. Another insisted that he had long since served out his full prison term and should be enrolled in the free command. Three more declared that they had been two months in prison and were still ignorant of the nature of the charges made against them. the convicts addressed themselves eagerly to me, under the impression, apparently, that I must be an inspector sent to Kará to investigate the prison management. In order to save Major Pótulof from embarrassment and the complainants from possible punishment, I hastened to assure them that we had no power to redress grievances or to grant relief; that we were merely travelers visiting Kará out of curiosity. The complaints and the manifestly bad condition of the prisons seemed to irritate Major Pótulof, and he grew more and more silent, moody, and morose as we went through the kámeras. He did not attempt to explain, defend, or excuse anything, nor did he then, nor at any subsequent time, ask me what impression the Ust Kará prisons made upon me. He knew very well what impression they must make.

In another stockaded yard, adjoining the one through which we had passed, stood the political prison for women; but Major Pótulof could not take us into it without the permission of the gendarme commandant, Captain Nikólin. From all that I subsequently learned with regard to this place of punishment, I have little doubt that, while it is eleaner and less overcrowded than the common-criminal prisons, it does not rank much above the latter in comfort or in sanitary condition.

Early Tuesday afternoon we visited the Middle Kará

prison, which was perhaps the best one we inspected at the mines. It was distant from the Lower Diggings about three miles, and was reached by a road that ran up the right bank of the Kará River through a desolate, snowy val-



VIEW NEAR UPPER KARÁ, AND HOUSES OF THE FREE COMMAND.

command. More wretched and cheerless places of abode than these can hardly be imagined. Readers who remember the so-called "shanties on the rocks" in the upper part of New York City can form, perhaps, with the aid of the illustration on this page, some faint idea of their appearance. The best of them could hardly bear comparison with the poorest of the Irish laborers' houses that

stand, here and there, along our railroads, while the worst of them were mere dog-kennels of driftwood and planks, in which it was almost incredible that human beings could exist throughout a Siberian winter.

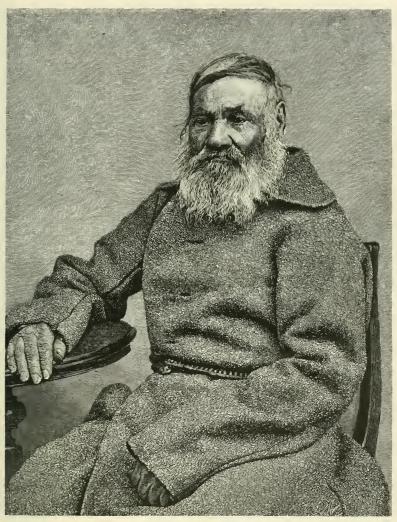
The ostensible object of organizing a free command in connection with the Kará prisons was to encourage reformation among the convicts by holding out to them, as a reward for good behavior, the hope of obtaining release from confinement and an opportunity to better their condition. It does not seem to me, however, that this object has been attained. The free command is a demoralizing rather than a reforming agency; it promotes rather than discourages drunkenness and licentiousness; it does not guarantee, even to criminals who are actually reforming, any permanent amelioration of condition; and every decade it is the means of turning loose upon the Siberian population three or four thousand common criminals of the worst class. The custom of allowing the wives and children of convicts to accompany them to Siberia, and to live - sometimes alone and unprotected — in the free command, results necessarily in great demoralization. Such wives and children are supported or at least aided to exist - by the Government, with the hope that they will ultimately exert a beneficial domestic influence over their criminal husbands and fathers; but the results rarely justify official anticipations. The women and girls in a great majority of cases go to the bad in the penal settlements, even if they have come uncorrupted through two or three hundred overcrowded étapes and forwarding There is little inducement, moreover, for a convict in the free command to reform and establish himself with his family in a comfortable house of his own, because he knows that in a comparatively short time he will be sent away to some other part of Siberia as a "forced colonist," and will lose all the material results of his industry and self-denial. He generally tries, therefore, to get through his term in the free command with as little labor and as

much vicious enjoyment as possible. Hundreds, if not thousands, of convicts look forward with eagerness to enrolment in the free command merely on account of the opportunities that it affords for escape. Every summer, when the weather becomes warm enough to make life out of doors endurable, the free command begins to overflow into the forests; and for two or three months a narrow but almost continuous stream of escaping convicts runs from the Kará penal settlements in the direction of Lake Baikál. The signal for this annual movement is given by the euckoo, whose notes, when first heard in the valley of the Kará, announce the beginning of the warm season. The cry of the bird is taken as an evidence that an escaped convict can once more live in the forests; and to run away, in convict slang, is to "go to General Kukúshka for orders." [Kukushka is the Russian name for the cuckoo.] More than 200 men leave the Kará free command every year to join the army of "General Kukúshka"; and in Siberia, as a whole, the number of runaway exiles and convicts who take the field in response to the summons of this popular officer exceeds 30,000. Most of the Kará convicts who "go to General Kukúshka for orders" in the early summer come back to the mines under new names and in leg-fetters the next winter; but they have had their outing, and have breathed for three whole months the fresh, free air of the woods, the mountains, and the steppes. With many convicts the love of wandering through the trackless forests and over the great plains of Eastern Siberia becomes a positive mania. They do not expect to escape altogether; they know that they must live for months the life of hunted fugitives, subsisting upon berries and roots, sleeping on the cold and often water-soaked ground, enduring hardships and miseries innumerable, and facing death at almost every step. But, in spite of all this, they cannot hear in early summer the first soft notes of the cuckoo without feeling an intense, passionate longing for the adventures and ex-

citements that attend the life of a brodyág [a vagrant or tramp].

"I had once a convict servant," said a prison official at Kará to me, "who was one of these irreclaimable vagrants, and who ran away periodically for the mere pleasure of living a nomadic life. He always suffered terrible hardships; he had no hope of escaping from Siberia; and he was invariably brought back in leg-fetters, sooner or later, and severely punished; but nothing could break him of the practice. Finally, after he had become old and gray-headed, he came to me one morning in early summer—he was then living in the free command — and said to me, 'Bárin, I wish you would please have me locked up.' 'Locked up!' said I. 'What for? What have you been doing?' 'I have not been doing anything,' he replied, 'but you know I am a brodyág. I have run away many times, and if I am not locked up I shall run away again. I am old and grayheaded now, I can't stand life in the woods as I could once, and I don't want to run away; but if I hear General Kukúshka calling me I must go. Please do me the favor to lock me up, your High Nobility, so that I can't go.' I did lock him up," continued the officer, "and kept him in prison most of the summer. When he was released the fever of unrest had left him, and he was as quiet, contented, and docile as ever."

There seems to me something pathetic in this inability of the worn, broken old convict to hear the cry of the cuckoo without yielding to the enticement of the wild, free, adventurous life with which that cry had become associated. He knew that he was feeble and broken; he knew that he could no longer tramp through the forests, swim rapid rivers, subsist upon roots, and sleep on the ground, as he once had done; but when the cuckoo called he felt again the impulses of his youth, he lived again in imagination the life of independence and freedom that he had known only in the pathless woods, and he was dimly conscious that if not prevented by force he "must go." As Ulysses had himself bound in order that he might not yield to the



OLD HARD-LABOR CONVICT.

voices of the sirens, so the poor old convict had himself committed to prison in order that he might not hear and obey the cry of the cuckoo, which was so intimately asso-

ciated with all that he had ever known of happiness and freedom.

It may seem to the reader strange that convicts are able to escape from penal settlements garrisoned and guarded by a force of a thousand Cossacks, but when one knows all the circumstances this ceases to be a matter for surprise. The houses of the ticket-of-leave convicts in the free command are not watched; there is no cordon of soldiers around the penal settlements; and it is comparatively an easy matter for a convict who is not under personal restraint to put into a gray bag a small quantity of food saved from his daily ration, tie a kettle to his belt, take an ax in his hand, and steal away at night into the trackless forest. It is a well-known fact, moreover, that many prison officials wink at escapes because they are able to turn them to pecuniary account. This they do by failing to report the runaways as "absent," by continuing to draw for weeks or months the clothing and the rations to which such runaways would be entitled if present, and by selling to the local representatives of Jewish speculators the food and garments thus acquired. Not infrequently these speculators have contracts to furnish prison supplies, and they fill them by reselling to the Government at a high price the very same flour and clothing that have just been stolen from it by its own officials. To an unscrupulous prison warden every dead or runaway convict is a source of steady revenue so long as his death or flight can be concealed and his name carried on the prison rolls. Under such circumstances, energetic measures to prevent the escape of criminals or to secure their recapture could hardly be expected.

The prison of Middle Kará, which is situated in the penal settlement of the same name, is a one-story log building of medium size, placed in such a way that one of its longer sides stands flush with the line of the street, while the other is inclosed by a high stockade so as to form a nearly square yard. It did not seem to me to differ much in appearance

or plan from the prison at Ust Kará; but it was in better sanitary condition than the latter, and was evidently of more recent construction. As most of the prisoners that belonged there were at work in the upper gold placer when we arrived, I could not determine by inspection whether or not the building would be overcrowded at night. Major Pótulof told me, in reply to a question, that the number of criminals confined in it was 107. At the time of our visit, however, its kámeras contained only a few men, who had been excused from hard labor on account of temporary disability, or who had been assigned to domestic work, such as sweeping or cooking. The atmosphere of the kámeras was heavy and lifeless, but it seemed to be infinitely better than the air in the Ust Kará prison, and I could breathe it without much repugnance. By fastening against the walls over the sleeping-platforms large fresh boughs of hemlock and pine, an attempt had apparently been made to disguise the peculiar odor that is characteristic of Siberian prisons. Between these boughs in some of the kameras I noticed, tacked against the logs, rectangular cards about twenty inches long by twelve inches wide, bearing in large printed letters verses from the New Testament. The only ones that I can now remember were: "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out," and "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Whence these scriptural cards came I do not know, but there seemed to me to be a strange and almost ghastly incongruity between the dark, grimy prison walls and the festal decorations of aromatic evergreens — between the rough plank sleeping-benches infested with vermin and the promise of rest for the weary and heavy-laden. How great a boon even bodily rest would be to the hard-labor convicts was shown in the pitiful attempts they had made to secure it by spreading down on the hard sleeping-benches thin patchwork mattresses improvised out of rags, cast-off foot-wrappers, and pieces cut from the skirts of their gray

overcoats. Not one of these mattresses contained less than twenty scraps and remnants of old cloth, while in some of them there must have been a hundred. They all looked like dirty "erazy-quilts" made out of paper-rags in a poorhouse, and they could hardly have made any appreciable difference in the hardness of the plank sleeping-platforms. A man might as well seek to obtain a comfortable night's rest on a front door-step by interposing between it and his tired body a ragged and dirty bath-towel. There can be no reasonable excuse, it seems to me, for the failure of the Russian Government to provide at least beds and pillows of straw for its hard-labor convicts. Civilized human beings put straw even into the kennels of their dogs; but the Russian Government forces men to work for ten or twelve hours a day in its East-Siberian mines; compels them after this exhausting toil to lie down on a bare plank; and then, to console them in their misery, tacks up on the grimy wall over their heads the command and the promise of Christ, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Mr. Frost and I made a careful examination of ten prisons in the province of the Trans-Baikál, and in none of them — with the single exception of the new central prison in Vérkhni Údinsk-did we find a bed, a pillow, or a blanket. Everywhere the prisoners lay down at night in their gray overcoats on bare planks, and almost everywhere they were tortured by vermin, and were compelled to breathe the same air over and over again until it seemed to me that there could not be oxygen enough left in it to support combustion in the flame of a farthing rush-light. If any one who can read Russian thinks that these statements exaggerate the facts, I beg him to refer to the description of the convict prison at the Kará Lower Diggings in Maximof's "Siberia and Penal Servitude," Vol. I, pages 100-103; to the description of the old Vérkhni Údinsk prison in Orfánof's "Afar," pages 220-222; and to the statements of the latter author with regard to East-Siberian prisons and prison management generally in the second part of his book.1 I am not saving these things for the first time; they have been said before, in Russia and by Russians. I do not repeat them because I like to do it; but because they ought to be repeated until the Russian Government shows some disposition to abate such evils.

After we had finished our inspection of the cells in the Middle Kará prison, we made an examination of the kitchen. Hard-labor convicts at Kará receive a daily ration consisting of three pounds of black rye-bread; about four ounces of meat, including the bone; a small quantity of barley, which is generally put into the water in which the meat is boiled for the purpose of making soup, and a little brick tea. Occasionally they have potatoes or a few leaves of cabbage; but such luxuries are bought with money made by extra work, or saved by petty "economies" in other ways. This ration seemed to me ample in quantity, but lacking in variety and very deficient in vegetables. The bread, which I tasted, was perhaps as good as that eaten by Russian peasants generally; but it was very moist and sticky, and pieces taken from the center of the loaf could be rolled back into dough in one's hands. The meat, which I saw weighed out to the convicts after it had been boiled and cut up into pieces about as large as dice, did not have an inviting appearance, and suggested to my mind small refuse scraps intended for use as soap-grease. The daily meals of the convicts were arranged as follows: in the morning, after the roll-call or "verification," breakfast, consisting of brick tea and black rye-bread, was served to the prisoners in their cells. The working parties then set

S. Maximof. St. Petersburg, 1871. "Afar," by M. I. Orfánof. Moseow,

and says it in italies, - that in the pendix F.

^{1 &}quot;Siberia and Penal Servitude," by course of nine years' service in Siberia, he "never saw a prison in which there were less than twice the number of prisoners for which it was in-Mr. Orfánof says, for example, - tended." (Page 233.) See also Ap-

out on foot for the gold placers, carrying with them bread and tea for lunch. This midday meal was eaten in the open air beside a camp-fire, regardless of weather, and sometimes in fierce winter storms. Late in the afternoon the convicts returned on foot to their cells and ate on their sleeping-platforms the first hearty and nourishing meal of the day, consisting of hot soup, meat, bread, and perhaps a little more brick tea. After the evening verification they were locked up for the night, and lay down to sleep in closely packed rows on the nári, or sleeping-benches, without removing their clothing, and without making any preparations for the night beyond bringing in the paráshas, or excrement buckets, spreading down their thin patchwork crazy-quilts, and rolling up some of their spare clothing to put under their heads. The clothing furnished to a hardlabor convict at Kará consists—or should, by law, consist-of one coarse linen shirt and one pair of linen trousers every six months; one cap, one pair of thick trousers, and one gray overcoat every year; a pólushúba, or outer coat of sheepskin, every two years; one pair of bródni, or loose leather boots, every three and a half months in winter; and one pair of kátí, or low shoes, every twentytwo days in summer. The quality of the food and clothing furnished by the Government may be inferred from the fact that the cost of maintaining a hard-labor convict at the mines is about \$50 a year, or a little less than fourteen cents a day.1

After having examined the Middle Kará prison as carefully as time and circumstances would permit, we proceeded up the valley to a point just beyond the penal settlement of Upper Karâ, and, leaving our vehicles there, walked down towards the river to the mines.

The auriferous sand in the valley of the Kará lies buried under a stratum of clay, gravel, or stones, varying in thickness from ten to twenty feet. The hard labor of the con-

 $^{^{\}rm 1}$ This was the estimate given me by Major Pótulof.



CONVICTS RETURNING AT NIGHT FROM THE MINES.

viets consists in the breaking up and removal of this overlying stratum and the transportation of the "pay gravel," or gold-bearing sand, to the "machine," where it is agitated with water in a sort of huge iron hopper and then allowed to run out with the water into a series of shallow inclined troughs, or flumes, where the "black sand" and the particles of gold fall to the bottom and are stopped by low transverse cleats.

The first placer that we visited is shown in the illustration on page 163. The day was cold and dark, a light powdery snow was falling, and a more dreary picture than that presented by the mine can hardly be imagined. Thirty or forty convicts, surrounded by a cordon of Cossacks, were at work in a sort of deep gravel pit, the bottom of which was evidently at one time the bed of the stream. Some of them were loosening with pointed crowbars the hardpacked clay and gravel, some were shoveling it upon small handbarrows, while others were carrying it away and dumping it at a distance of 150 or 200 yards. The machine was not in operation, and the labor in progress was nothing more than the preliminary "stripping," or laying bare of the gold-bearing stratum. The convicts, most of whom were in leg-fetters, worked slowly and listlessly, as if they were tired out and longed for night; the silence was broken only by the steady clinking of crowbars, a quick, sharp order now and then from one of the overseers, or the jingling of chains as the convicts walked to and fro in couples carrying hand-barrows. There was little or no conversation except that around a small camp-fire a few yards away, where half a dozen soldiers were crouching on the snowy ground watching a refractory tea-kettle, and trying to warm their benumbed hands over a sullen, fitful blaze. We watched the progress of the work for ten or fifteen minutes, and then, chilled and depressed by the weather and the scene, returned to our vehicle and drove back to the Lower Diggings.



CONVICTS AT WORK IN A KARÁ GOLD PLACER.

The hours of labor in the Kará mines are from 7 A. M. to 5 P. M. in winter, and from 5 A. M. to 7 P. M. in summer. A considerable part of this time, however, is spent by the convicts in going back and forth between the *razréis*, or "cutting," and the prisons where they spend their nights.



A CONVICT OF THE FREE COMMAND SURREPTITIOUSLY WASHING OUT GOLD.

The amount of gold extracted from the placers annually is eleven *puds*, or about four hundred pounds, all of which goes into the private purse of his Majesty the Tsar. The actual yield of the mines is probably a little more than this, since many of the convicts of the free command surreptitiously wash out gold for themselves and sell it to dealers in that commodity, who smuggle it across the

Chinese frontier. To have "golden wheat," as the convicts call it, in one's possession at all in Siberia is a penal offense; but the profits of secret trade in it are so great that many small speculators run the risk of buying it from the convicts, while the latter argue that "the gold is God's," and that they have a perfect right to mine it for themselves if they can do so without too much danger of detection and punishment. The cost of maintaining the Kará penal establishment was estimated by Major Pótulof at 500,000 rúbles, or about \$250,000 a year. What proportion of this expense is borne by the Tsar, who takes the proceeds of the convicts' labor, I could not ascertain. He receives from all his gold-mines in Eastern Siberia—the "cabinet mines," as they are called —about 3600 pounds of pure gold per annum.

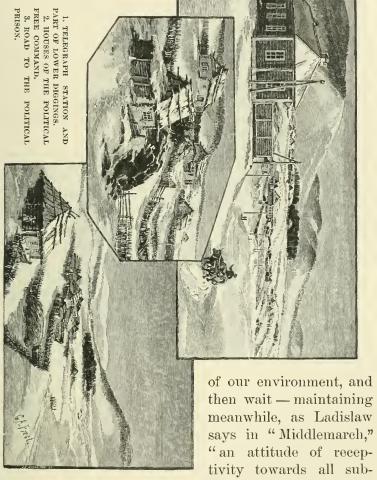
CHAPTER VI

THE KARÁ "FREE COMMAND"

THE most important of the objects that we had in view at the mines of Kará was the investigation of penal servitude in its relation to political offenders. Common, hard-labor felons, such as burglars, counterfeiters, and murderers, we had seen, or could see, in a dozen other places; but political convicts were to be found only in the log prisons and penal settlements of Kará, and there, if anywhere, their life must be studied. In order to succeed in the task that we had set ourselves, it was necessary that we should personally visit and inspect one or both of the political prisons, and obtain unrestricted access, in some way, to the small body of state criminals who had finished their "term of probation" and were living under surveillance in the so-called "free command." We were well aware that these were not easy things to do; but we were no longer inexperienced and guileless tourists, dependent wholly upon letters of introduction and official consent. We had had six months' training in the school that sharpens the wits of the politicals themselves, we had learned how best to deal with suspicious police and gendarme officers, we were in possession of all the information and all the suggestions that political ex-convicts in other parts of Siberia could give us, and we saw no reason to despair of success.

It seemed to me that the best policy for us to pursue, at first, was to make as many friends as possible; get hold of

the threads of social and official relationship in the penal settlement where we found ourselves; avoid manifestations of interest in the political convicts; make a careful study



lime chances." Nothing was to be gained and everything might be risked by premature or over-hasty action. For three or four days, therefore, we did not attempt to do anything except to visit the common-criminal prisons and the mines, talk with the officials who called

upon us, make ourselves agreeable to Major Pótulof and his pretty wife, and study the situation. It soon became evident to me that there would be no use in asking for permission to see the political convicts of the free command, and that if we made their acquaintance at all we should have to do it secretly. I knew most of them by name and reputation; I had a letter of introduction to one of them, - Miss Nathalie Armfeldt, - and I had been furnished by her friends with a map of the Lower Diggings, showing the situation of the little cabin in which she and her mother lived; but how to visit her, or open communications with her secretly, in a small village swarming with Cossacks and gendarmes, and, moreover, in a village where a foreigner was as closely and curiously watched and stared at as the Tsar of all the Russias would be in a New England hamlet, I did not know. But that was not the worst of it. I soon discovered that I could not even get away from Major Pótulof. From the moment of our arrival he gave up all his other duties and devoted himself exclusively to us. If we stayed at home all day, he remained all day at home. If we went out, he accompanied us. I could not make a motion towards my hat or my overcoat without his asking, "Where are you going?" If I replied that I was going out for exercise, or for a little walk, he would say," Wait a minute and I will go with you." What could I do? He evidently did not intend that we should see some things in Kará, or have an opportunity to make any independent investigations. I understood and fully appreciated his situation as a high officer of the Crown, and I was sorry to cause him any uneasiness or annoyance; but I had undertaken to ascertain the real state of affairs, and I intended to do it by any means that seemed to be within the limits of honor and fairness. The most embarrassing feature of the situation, from a moral point of view, was that growing out of our presence in Major Pótulof's house as his guests. It did not seem to be fair to mislead the

man whose hospitality we were enjoying, or even to conceal from him our real purposes; and yet we had no alter-Our only chance of success lay in secrecy. If we should intimate to Major Pótulof that we desired to see the political convicts of the free command, and to hear what they might have to say concerning their life and the treatment to which they had been subjected, he would probably express grave disapproval; and then we, as his guests. should be in honor bound to respect his authority. It would hardly be fair to eat a man's bread and then openly disregard his expressed wishes in a matter that might be of vital interest to him as well as to us. I revolved these and many other similar considerations in my mind for two or three days, and finally decided that if I could see the political convicts before Major Pótulof had said anything to me on the subject I would do it - acting, of course, upon my own responsibility, at my own risk, and, if possible, in such a way as to relieve him from the least suspicion of complicity. I did not see why we should be tied hand and foot by accidental obligations of hospitality growing out of a situation into which we had virtually been forced. As soon as I had come to this decision I began to watch for opportunities; but I soon found myself involved in a network of circumstances and personal relations that rendered still more difficult and hazardous the course I intended to pursue. On the second day after our arrival we received a call from Captain Nikólin, the gendarme commandant of the political prisons. He had heard of our sudden appearance, and had come to see who we were and what we wanted in that dreaded penal settlement. He made upon me, from the first, a very unfavorable impression; but I was not prepared, nevertheless, for the contemptuous, almost insulting, coldness of the reception given to him by Major Pótulof. It was apparent, at a glance, that the two men were upon terms of hostility; and for a moment I wondered why Nikólin should put himself in a position to

be so discourteously treated. Most men would have regarded such a reception as equivalent to a slap in the face, and would have left the house at the first opportunity. Gendarme officers, however, are trained to submit to anything, if by submission they can attain their ends. Captain Nikólin wished to see the American travelers, and, notwithstanding the chilly nature of the reception given him, he was as bland as a May morning. It was obviously my policy to show him as much cordiality as I possibly could without irritating Major Pótulof. I desired not only to remove any suspicions that he might entertain with regard to us, but, if possible, to win his confidence. "It must gratify even a gendarme officer," I thought, "to be treated with marked respect and cordiality by foreign travelers, when he has just been openly affronted by one of his own associates. We, as Major Pótulof's guests, might naturally be expected to follow his lead. If we take the opposite course, Nikólin will give us credit not only for courtesy, but for independence of judgment and clear perception of character, and we shall thus score a point." I never had any reason to doubt the soundness of this reasoning. Nikólin was evidently gratified by the unexpected evidences of interest and respect that appeared in our behavior towards him, and when he took his leave he shook my hand and expressed the hope that we might meet again. He did not dare, in Major Pótulof's presence, to invite us to call upon him, nor did we venture to promise that we would do so; but we intended, nevertheless, to pay him a visit just as soon as we could escape from surveillance. Major Pótulof had delicacy or prudence enough not to say a word in dispraise of Nikólin after the latter had gone; but in subsequent conversation with other officers I learned that the personal relations between the two men were greatly strained, and that Nikólin was generally hated and despised, by the regular army officers at the post, as a secret spy and informer.

"He writes full reports to St. Petersburg of everything we do," said one officer to me; "but," he added, "let him write. I'm not afraid of him. We have had four or five gendarme officers in charge of the political prison here in the last three years, and he's the worst of the whole lot."

This information with regard to Nikólin and his relations to Pótulof greatly complicated the situation. Suppose I should succeed in making the acquaintance of the political convicts of the free command; Nikólin would almost certainly hear of it, and would probably find out that I had brought the convicts letters. He would at once report the facts to St. Petersburg, and would make them the basis of an accusation against his enemy Pótulof by saying: "These American travelers are Pótulof's guests. They have visited the political convicts secretly at night, and have even committed a penal offense by carrying letters. They would hardly have dared to do this without Pótulof's knowledge and consent; consequently Pótulof has been accessory to a violation of law, and has interfered with the discharge of my duties. I cannot consent to be held responsible for the political convicts if Major Pótulof is going to aid foreign travelers in getting interviews with them and carrying letters to and from them."

The result of this would be that I, while receiving Major Pótulof's hospitality, should be betraying him to his enemies and getting him into trouble—a thing that went terribly against all my instincts of honor. But even this was not all. Captain Nikólin, as I subsequently learned, was strongly opposed to the ticket-of-leave organization known as the free command, and had repeatedly recommended its abolition. My visit to the political convicts—should I make one—would furnish him with the strongest kind of argument in support of his assertion that the free command was a dangerous innovation. He would write or telegraph to the Minister of the Interior: "I understand that it is the intention of the Government to keep the more

dangerous class of state criminals in complete isolation, allowing them no communication with their relatives except through the gendarmerie. It is manifestly impossible for me to give this intention effect if political convicts are allowed to live outside the prison where they can be seen



A PART OF THE LOWER DIGGINGS WITH THE POLITICAL PRISON IN THE DISTANCE.

and interviewed by strangers. Foreign travelers are coming more and more frequently to Siberia, and Kará is no longer an unknown or an inaccessible place. If army officers like Pótulof are going to aid such foreign travelers in opening communication with the political convicts, the Government must either abolish the free command and recommit its members to prison, or else abandon the idea of keeping them in isolation."

It was not difficult to foresee the probable consequences of such a report. I might, by a single secret visit, bring disaster upon the whole free command, and cause the re-

turn of all its members to chains, leg-fetters, and prison cells. That I should be the means of adding to the miseries of these unfortunate people, instead of relieving them, was an almost insupportable thought; and I lay awake nearly all of one night balancing probabilities and trying to make up my mind whether it would be worth while to run such risks. I finally decided to adhere to my original intention and make the acquaintance of the political convicts of the free command at all hazards, provided I could escape the courteous, hospitable, but unceasing vigilance of Major Pótulof.

I lived in Kará five days without having a single opportunity to get out-of-doors unaccompanied and unwatched. At last my chance came. On the sixth day Major Pótulof was obliged to go to Ust Kará to attend a meeting of an army board, or court of inquiry, convened to investigate the recent destruction by fire of a large Government flour storehouse.1 He had said nothing to me about the political convicts; he had apparently become convinced that we were "safe" enough to leave, and he went away commending us laughingly to the care of his wife. Before he had

corruption and demoralization that are characteristic of the Russian bureaucratic system everywhere, and particularly in Siberia. The building should have contained, and was supposed to contain, at the time it was burned, 20,000 puds (360 tons) of Government flour, intended for the use of the convicts at the Kará mines. Upon making an examination of the ruins after the fire it was discovered that a small quantity of flour, which belonged to a private individual and had been stored in the building temporarily as an accommodation, was only slightly charred on the outside, and that threefourths of it could still be used. Of the 20,000 puds of Government flour, however, not the slightest trace could be ter. I presume that it was so in this case.

1 The history of this storehouse fur- found, and an investigation showed nishes an interesting illustration of the that it had all been stolen by somebody, and that the building had been burned to conceal the theft. A few months later, after our departure from Kará, and while the investigation was still in progress, Major Pótulof's house, which contained all the documents relating to the case, was destroyed by an incendiary fire in the same mysterious way. The censor has never allowed the results of the investigation to be published in the Siberian newspapers, and I do not know who, if anybody, was found to be guilty of the double crime. In most cases of this kind the relations of the criminals with the higher authorities are found to be such as to necessitate a suppression of the facts and a hushing up of the whole mat-

been gone an hour I tore out the pocket of my large, loose fur overcoat, dropped down between the outside cloth and the lining a few little presents that I had promised to give to the political convicts, transferred from my waist-belt to my pocket the letters that I had for them and the rough map of the village with which I was provided, and then set out on foot for the political prison. It was about two o'clock in the afternoon. Major Pótulof expected to be absent until the following night, so that I could safely count upon twenty-four hours of freedom from surveillance. My plan was to pay a visit first to Captain Nikólin, get upon the most friendly possible terms with him, remove any lingering suspicions that he might still entertain with regard to us, and then, about dark, go directly from his house to the cabin of Miss Nathalie Armfeldt, the political convict from Kiev to whom I had a letter of introduction. My object in calling first upon Captain Nikólin was twofold. In the first place, I felt sure that he would know that Major Pótulof had just gone to Ust Kará, and I thought it would please and compliment the gendarme officer to see that I had availed myself of my very first moment of freedom to call upon him, notwithstanding Pótulof's hostility to him. In the second place, I reasoned that if I should be seen going to the house of a political convict it would be safer and would excite less suspicion to be seen going there directly from the house of the commandant than from my own quarters. In the former case it would, very likely, be thought that I was acting with the commandant's knowledge or permission; and in any case open boldness would be safer than skulking timidity.

Captain Nikólin was an old and experienced gendarme officer of the most subtle and unscrupulous type, who had received his training under General Muravióf, "the hangman," in Poland, and had been about thirty years in the service. Personally he was a short, heavily built man fifty or fifty-five years of age, with a bald head, a full gray beard,

thin, tightly closed, rather cruel lips, an impenetrable face, and cold gray eyes. He had the suavity and courteous manners of the accomplished gendarme officer, but the unfavorable impression that he made upon me at our first meeting was deepened, rather than effaced, by subsequent acquaintance. He was in undress uniform, and he greeted me with what he evidently intended for frank, open cordiality, softening, so far as possible, all the hard lines of his face; but he could not bring a spark of good fellowship into his cold, watchful gray eyes, and I felt conscious that all his real mental processes were carefully masked. So far as I could read his character, its one weak point was personal pride in the importance and responsibility of his position pride in the fact that he, a mere captain of gendarmes, had been selected in St. Petersburg and sent to Siberia to command this important prison; had been freed from all local control; and had been given the unusual privilege of communicating directly with the Minister of the Interior, which was the next thing to communicating directly with the Tsar. It seemed to me that a man who felt such a pride. and who knew that in spite of his position he was despised by all the regular army-officers at the post, would be gratified to find that an intelligent American, living in the very house of one of his (Nikólin's) enemies, had clearness of insight and independence of judgment enough to call upon him the moment Pótulof's restraint was removed, and to treat him with marked deference and respect. To what extent this reasoning was well founded I do not know, but upon it I acted. I apologized for not calling upon him before, and explained that I had been prevented from doing this by circumstances beyond my control. He bowed gracefully, said that he understood the circumstances perfectly, and asked me to do him the honor of drinking tea with him. A steaming samovár was soon brought in by a soldier, our cups were filled with the beverage that cheers but does not inebriate, cigarettes were lighted, and we settled

ourselves in easy-chairs for a comfortable chat. I narrated with as much spirit as possible our adventures in Siberia; brought out casually the fact that I was a member of the American Geographical Society; referred to my previous connection with the Russian-American Telegraph Company; described dog-sledge travel and tent life with the wandering Koráks; and gave an account of my pleasant interview with Mr. Vlangálli, the Associate Minister of Foreign Affairs in St. Petersburg, in order to show him that I had come to Siberia openly and boldly, with the consent and approbation of the highest Russian officials. He seemed to like to hear me talk; and, as I had not the slightest objection to talking, I rambled on until I had given him a detailed history of my whole life up to the year of our Lord 1885. If I omitted anything, I omitted it through forgetfulness or because he failed to draw it out. inquired whether I intended to write an account of my Siberian trip, and I replied that certainly I did; that I was in the service of The Century Magazine; that I had already written one series of articles on Siberia, and intended to write another as soon as I should get home. This seemed to interest him, and I therefore poured out information about American magazines in general and The Century in particular; invited him to come to our house and look over Mr. Frost's sketches; told him how much money The Century purposed to spend in illustrating our papers, and expressed regret that his ignorance of English would prevent him from reading them. He remarked hopefully that they might be translated. I replied that I trusted they would be, since my first book had been twice translated into Russian; and that, in any event, he would be interested in looking at the illustrations. What else I said in the course of our long conversation I cannot now remember, but never, I think, did I give any other man so much information about myself and my affairs as I gave that gendarme officer.

My frankness and my childlike confidence in him finally began to produce the desired results. His manner softened and became more cordial; he poured out for me a third or a fourth cup of tea, asked me if I would not like to have some rum in it; and then, finding that I could be a sympathetic listener as well as a frank and communicative talker, he began to give me information about himself. He described to me the organization of the gendarmerie and the way in which gendarme officers are educated; gave me his own personal history; told me how many times and under what circumstances he had been promoted; how much salary he received; what decorations he had; how much longer he would have to serve before he could retire on a pension; and said, with a little pride, that he was the only officer of his rank in all Siberia who had the right to communicate directly with the Minister of the Interior. conversation finally drifted into a discussion of commoncriminal exile, and to my great surprise he vigorously condemned the étapes and the forwarding prisons; declared that the life of common convicts on the road was simply awful; and said that the banishment of criminals to Siberia was not only ruinous to the persons banished, but very detrimental to all the interests of the country. To me this was a wholly unexpected turn, and for a moment I hardly knew what course to take. He might be merely posing as a philanthropist,—a sort of Howard in a gendarme officer's uniform,—or he might be luring me on with a view to finding out how much I knew and what my opinions were. An instant of reflection convinced me that my safest course would be to follow his lead, without betraying too much knowledge of the subject, and to lay as much stress as possible on the few good prisons that I had seen. I therefore deplored the overcrowding of the forwarding prisons and the bad sanitary condition of the étapes, but referred to the new central prison at Vérkhni Údinsk as an evidence that the Government was trying to improve the condition

of things by erecting better buildings. Without any suggestion or prompting from me, Captain Nikólin then diverted the current of our conversation to another branch of the subject and began to talk about the political convicts at the mines of Kará. Their condition, he said, was much better, and their life much easier, than people generally supposed. They lived together in large, well-lighted kámeras; they were not required to do any work; they had a good library; they could receive money from their friends; and at the expiration of their "term of probation" they were set at liberty, and were allowed to live in houses and to cultivate little gardens of their own. I expressed great surprise at this presentation of the case, and said, "Do you mean to tell me that the political convicts don't work in the mines?"

"Work!" he exclaimed. "Certainly not. They have nothing to do but sit in large, comfortable, well-lighted rooms, and read or study."

"Do they ever have communication with their friends or relatives in European Russia?" I inquired.

"Certainly," he replied. "That was one of the things that I insisted on when I came here, that they should be allowed to write to their friends and relatives. Of course I read their letters, or rather their postal cards, but they can write as much as they like."

"We have always had the impression in America," I said, "that state criminals in Siberia are compelled to work in underground mines, often chained to wheelbarrows, and that their life is a constant struggle with hardships and misery."

He smiled a calm, superior sort of smile, and said that he himself had had precisely similar ideas before coming to Siberia, and that he had been surprised just as I was. "Why," said he, "if you should take a look into one of the kámeras of the political prison at this moment you would see the prisoners sitting around a big table, reading and writing, just as if they were in some library."

I remarked that that would be a very pleasant thing to see, as well as to write about, and asked him if there would be any objection to my taking a look into one of the *kámeras*.

"Well—yes," he replied hesitatingly. "I have no authority to allow any one to inspect the prison. I can show you, however, some of the books from the library—even English books."

He thereupon called a soldier from the hall and sent him to the prison with orders to bring back any English books or periodicals that happened to be in. The soldier shortly returned with a copy of Shelley's poems and a recent number of *Punch*. These Nikólin handed to me triumphantly, as proofs that the political convicts had a library, and were even furnished with English periodicals.

"Not long ago," he continued, "they had theatrical performances in one of the *kámeras*; and at one time they actually published a little manuscript newspaper for their own amusement."

He then got out the prison books to show me how much money the political convicts had received from their relatives that year. The total amount was 6044 *rúbles*, or about \$3022.

"Do the prisoners themselves have the spending of this money?" I inquired.

¹ Upou my return to Irkútsk I was fortunate enough to make the acquaintance of an officer who was employed in the Comptroller's Department, and who had access to all the accounts of the Kará prisons. I asked him if he would be kind enough to ascertain for me how much money had been sent to the political convicts at Kará by their relatives in the first ten months of 1885. He made the investigation and reported that the prisoners had received, on an average, 3714 cents a month per eapita, or about \$375 in all. Captain Nikólin apparently had shown me a "fixed-up" and deceptive statement, for the purpose of making me

believe that the political convicts were in receipt of \$3000 or \$4000 a year over and above their subsistence, and that, consequently, they were living in comparative luxnry. I have no doubt that the computation made by the officer of the Comptroller's Department in Irkútsk was an accurate one, and that \$375 was really the amount that the prisoners had received. Why the sum was not larger I shall explain in another place. Three hundred and seventy-five dollars every ten months, if divided among a hundred convicts, would give each of them about a cent and a quarter a day.

"Yes," he replied. "It is not given into their hands; but they can direct the expenditure of it, and buy with it anything that the prison regulations allow."

I received all these revelations with pleased surprise, and became almost enthusiastic when the humane and philanthropic gendarme officer drew for me a charming picture of happy state criminals, living contentedly together in large, airy rooms, studying English literature in a well-appointed library, reading *Punch* after dinner for relaxation, publishing a newspaper once a week for self-improvement, and getting up a theatrical entertainment in a kámera now and then as a safety-valve for their exuberant spirits! I was grieved and shocked, however, to learn, a moment later, that these well-treated convicts were not worthy of the gracious elemency shown to them by a benevolent paternal government, and repaid its kindness with the blackest treachery and ingratitude.

"You have no idea, Mr. Kennan," said Captain Nikólin, "how unscrupulous they are, and how much criminal skill they show in concealing forbidden things, and in smuggling letters into and out of prison. Suppose that you were going to search a political convict as thoroughly as possible, how would you do it?"

I replied that I should strip him naked and make a careful examination of his clothing.

"Is that all you would do?" he inquired, with a surprised air.

I said that no other course of procedure suggested itself to me just at that moment.

"Would you look in his ears?"

"No," I answered; "I should not think of looking in his ears."

"Would you search his mouth?"

Again I replied in the negative.

"Would you look in a hollow tooth?"

I solemnly declared that such a thing as looking in a

hollow tooth for a letter would never, under any circumstances, have occurred to me.

"Well," he said triumphantly, "I have taken tissue paper with writing on it out of a prisoner's ear, out of a prisoner's mouth, and once I found a dose of deadly poison concealed under a capping of wax in a convict's hollow tooth. Ah-h-h!" he exclaimed, rubbing his hands, "they are very sly, but I know all their tricks."

A cold shiver ran down my back as I suddenly thought of the things that lay hidden in my overcoat. Between the cloth and the lining were two Chinese tea-cups, a handmirror, and a small red feather duster, which had been intrusted to me by an exiled lady in a village near Irkútsk. and which I had promised to deliver to Miss Armfeldt with assurances of the donor's remembrance and love. I had left the overcoat hanging in the hall, and if this gendarme officer was so extremely suspicious as to look in ears for letters and in hollow teeth for poison, perhaps he had already ordered one of his subordinates to make an examination of it. How I should explain the presence between the cloth and the lining of such unusual articles of equipment as two porcelain tea-cups, a hand-mirror, and a red feather duster, I did not know. I might say that Americans are constitutionally sensitive with regard to their personal appearance, and that, when making calls, they always earry looking-glasses in the tail-pockets of their overcoats, in order that they may properly adjust their neckties before entering the drawing-rooms of their acquaintances; but how should I account for the tea-cups and the long-handled feather duster? I might as well try to explain the presence of a mouse-trap and a fire-extinguisher in a diving-bell! For twenty minutes I sat there in an uncomfortable frame of mind, half expecting every time the door opened that a Cossack would enter with the red feather duster in his hand. The apprehended catastrophe, however, did not occur, and Nikólin continued to

pour out information concerning the political convicts and their life at the mines. Much that he said was true; but the truth was so interwoven with misrepresentation that if I had been the ignorant and credulous tourist he supposed me to be I should have been completely deceived. To an on-looker who understood the situation, and could see into both hands, the game that we were playing would have been full of interest. My acquaintance with the political prison was almost as accurate and thorough as that of Captain Nikólin himself. I had a carefully drawn plan of it in a belt around my body; I had a list containing the names of all the prisoners; I could have described to him the appearance and the situation of every object in every cell; I knew exactly what the convicts had to eat and wear and how they spent their time; I knew that four of them had been chained to wheelbarrows and that several were insane; and I could have given him a detailed history of the prison for the five preceding years. With all this information in my mind, with a letter of introduction to the political conviets in my pocket, and with presents for them concealed in my overcoat. I had to sit there and listen coolly to statements that I knew to be false; assume feelings that I did not have; and play, without the quiver of an eyelash, the part of a good-humored, credulous, easy-going tourist who had nothing to conceal, who was incapable of keeping to himself even the details of his own private life, and who was naturally surprised and delighted to find that the political convicts, instead of being chained to wheelbarrows in damp subterranean mines, were really treated with humanity, consideration, and benevolent kindness by an intelligent and philanthropic commandant.

I do not know what impression I made upon Captain Nikólin in the course of our long interview; but I have some reason to believe that I succeeded in blinding and misleading one of the most adroit and unscrupulous gendarme officers in all Eastern Siberia. I may be greatly